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CHRISTIANITY

RELATION TO THE PRESENT STATE OF SOCIETY AND OPINION.

By M. GUIZOT.

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1871.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Post 8vo, 9*s.* 6*d.*

"No one can open this book, and recollect the circumstances which produced it, without feeling that it is a valuable contribution to the literature of the present controversy."—*Edinburgh Review.*

THE PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTIANITY.

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"A remarkable series of religious meditations. They form a sequel to a similar volume on the Essence of Christianity, published two years ago, and an introduction to a further series, in which M. Guizot proposes to treat the great questions of the history of Christianity, and the future destiny of the Christian religion. The book is one of great interest."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

PREFACE.

In the First Series of these Meditations, I gave a summary of the facts and dogmas which constitute, as I think, the foundation and the essence of the Christian Religion. In the next series I retraced the Reawakening of Faith and of Christian Life during the nineteenth century in France, both amongst Romanists and Protestants. With Christianity thus reanimated and resuscitated amongst us, after having passed through one of its most violent trials, I confronted the principal philosophical systems which in these days reject and combat it: Rationalism, Positivism, Pantheism, Materialism, Scepticism. I essayed to determine the fundamental error which seems to me to characterize each of those systems, and to have always rendered them inadequate

to the office either of satisfying or explaining man's nature and destiny. That series of my Meditations I concluded with these words: "Why is it that Christianity, in spite of all the attacks which it has had to undergo, and all the ordeals through which it has been made to pass, has for eighteen centuries satisfied infinitely better the spontaneous instincts and invincible cravings of humanity? Is it not because it is pure from the errors which vitiate the different systems of philosophy just passed in review? because it fills up the void that those systems either create or leave in the human soul? because, in short, it conducts man nigher to the fountain of light?"*

Far from wishing to elude any of the difficulties of this question, I would now set Christianity in contact with the ideas and forces that seem most contrary to it, and with three of them more especially: Liberty, Independent Morality, and Science.

* Meditations on the Actual State of Christianity. Eighth Meditation: Impiety, Recklessness, Perplexity, p. 336.

Assertions are running the tour of the world that Christianity can accommodate itself neither to liberty nor science; that morality is essentially distinct and separate from Religious Faith. All this I hold to be false and highly prejudicial to the very cause of Liberty, of Morality, and of Science, which those who give utterance to such assertions affect to serve. I believe Christianity and Liberty to be not only compatible with each other, but necessary to each other. I regard Morality as naturally and intimately united to Religion. I am convinced that Christianity and Science need not make any mutual sacrifices, that neither has anything to fear from the other. This I establish in the first three Meditations of the present series. I then enter into the peculiar domain of Christianity, and determine what, in the presence of Liberty, of Philosophical Morality, and of Human Science, is the principle and what the bearing of "Christian Ignorance" and of Christian Faith. I finally apply to ideas their natural and inevitable law, the law which

obliges them to express themselves in facts; I interrogate theory thus transformed into practice, and I show that Christianity alone supports this test victoriously. "Christian Life" becomes a forcible demonstration of the Legitimacy of Christian Faith. With these three Meditations the present series concludes.

But to complete my undertaking, a final and capital question, the historical question, remains to be treated. Not that I think of retracing the History of Christianity throughout the whole of its course; such a design is far from my thoughts. I neither can nor wish to do more than to demonstrate the grand historical facts which, in my opinion, are in Christianity the stamp of a divine origin, and of a divine influence upon the development and destiny of the human race. Of these facts the following is a summary:—

1. The authority of the sacred books.
2. The primitive foundation of Christianity.
3. The Christian Faith persistent from age to age.

4. The Church of Christ persistent also from age to age.

5. Romanism and Protestantism.

6. The different Antichristian crises, their character and their issue.

It is upon these grand facts, and the questions which they suggest, that Historical Criticism has in our days exercised itself with ardour, as it is continuing to do; science, severe and daring, no invention of our epoch, but beyond all doubt one of its glories! If, after concluding this final series of my Meditations, I shall have succeeded in appreciating at their real value the exigencies made and the results obtained by Historical Criticism, where it has applied itself to the History of Christianity, I shall have realised the object which I proposed to myself on voluntarily entering upon this solemn and laborious study, where I meet with so much that is obscure, and so many quick-sands.

But as I draw near the close, a scruple seizes

me. What have I been thinking of to persist obstinately in casting such a work into the midst of the events and the practical problems which are agitating the whole civilized world, and which are demanding their instant solution? What good result can I expect from studying the past history of the Christian Religion in my country, or even speculating upon its future prospects, when the actual condition of the present generation and the lot of that which is to succeed it on the stage, are subject to so many troubles and plunged in such darkness? The more narrowly I scrutinize generations—the honour and the destiny of which I have so much at heart, for my children form part of them—the more am I struck and disquieted by two facts: on the one side the general sentiment of fatigue and incertitude manifesting itself in society and in individuals: on the other side not merely the grandeur but the unusual complexity of the questions agitated. I fear that, in her lassitude and in her sceptical vacillations, France may not

render an exact account to herself of the problems and perils scattered over her path, of their number, their gravity, and their intimate connexion. I fear that, from not having an accurate conception of what her burthen is, and from not having the courage at once to weigh it well, the moment when she will have to bear it will come upon her with the necessary forces unmustered, and the necessary resolutions unformed.

Almost every great epoch in history has been devoted to some question, if not an exclusive one, at least one dominant both in events and opinions, and around which the varying opinions and the efforts of men were concentrated. Not to go farther back than the era of modern history —in the sixteenth century the question of the unity of Religion and of its Reform; in the seventeenth century the question of pure monarchy, with its conquests abroad and administration at home; in the eighteenth century that of the operation of civil and religious liberty: such have been in France the different points on which ideas have

culminated, the different objects which each social movement had specially in view. The systems of the day, although opposed, were clear; the struggles ardent but well defined. Men walked in those days on high roads; they did not wander about in the infinite complications of a labyrinth.

And it is in a very labyrinth of questions and of ideas, of essays and events, diverse in character, confused, incoherent, contradictory, in which in these days the civilized world is plunged. I do not pretend to seize the clue to the labyrinth; I propose but to throw some light upon the chaos.

First I turn my eyes to the external situation and relations of the States of Christendom, and consider the questions which concern the boundaries of territories and the distribution of populations between distinct and independent nations. Formerly these questions were all reducible to one—the aggrandizement or the weakening of these different States, and the maintenance or the dis-

turbance of that balance of forces which was called the balance of power in Europe. War and Diplomacy, Conquests and Treaties, discussed and settled this supreme question, of which Grotius expounded the theory, and Ancillon wrote the history. Now we are no longer in a situation so simple. What a complication of ideas: what ideas, novel and ill-defined, start up in these days to embarrass the course and entangle the relations of States! The question of races, the question of nationalities, the question of little states and of great political unities, the question of popular sovereignty and of its rights beyond the limits of nations as well as in their midst,—all these problems arise and cast into the shade, as a routine which has served its turn, the old public right and the maxims of the equilibrium of Europe, in their place seeking themselves to impose rules for regulating the territorial organizations and the external relations of States.

Not that the old traditional policy of Europe does not mingle itself with, and exercise a

powerful influence upon, the new ideas and questions which invade us; however intellectual theories and ambitions may change, the passions and interests of men are permanent. War and the right of conquest have made good their old pretensions, and this before our very eyes, without any respect for the principle of Nationalities and of Races, a principle nevertheless inscribed upon the very standards which the conquerors bore. Prussia has aggrandized herself in the name of German Unity, and at the very moment excluded from participating in the common affairs of Germany, the seven or eight millions of Germans who form part of the Empire of Austria. Prussia seized the petty German Republic of Frankfort, evidently against the will of its sovereign people, and Danish Schleswick does not yet form part of the political group, to the class of which she belongs by similarity of national origin and of language. Even while sheltering themselves under the Ægis of some general idea, selfish interests and rude violence have not ceased to play a great part in

the events which are passing before us, and if the ambition of Frederick the Second was not more legitimate, it was at least more logical than that of his successors.

I am far from meaning to deny that the new ideas which men follow, and the desires which they evince, contain a certain part of truth, or to affirm that they have not a right to a certain share of influence. The identity of origin and of race, the possession in common of a single name and of one language, have a moral value very capable of becoming itself a political force; of this fair and prudent statesmanship is bound to hold account. But policy becomes chimerical and dangerous when it attributes to these new ideas and these aspirations a supreme authority and right to dominion; and what shocks all experience and common sense is to reject, as out of date, and no longer applicable, maxims which were the foundation of the public law of nations, and which, up to the present time, have presided over the relations of

States. The equilibrium of Europe, the long duration of territorial agglomerations, the right of small states to exist and be independent, the ancient titles to government, and the respect for ancient treaties,—all these elements of European order have not succumbed, neither were they bound to succumb, to the theory of nationalities, and the fashionable doctrine of great political unities. What would not be said, and what would not be said with justice, if France had proclaimed that, as Belgium and Western Switzerland speak French, that, as their populations have, both in origin and manners, great affinities with our fellow countrymen in French Flanders and in Franche-Comté, the principal of National Unity requires their incorporation with France? Prince Metternich was wrong to say that Italy was a mere Geographical expression; there are certainly between the nations of Italy historical bonds, both intellectual and moral, which draw them towards one another, and repel from their territories all foreign domination. But this

relationship, which may, and ought to be, a principle of union, did not impose upon Italy the form of political unity; and the *régime* of a confederation of States might have been established in the peninsula and yet its liberation from the foreigner might have been secured, and a satisfaction might have been procured along our own frontier of the Alps, in the interests of our own security, and of that of Europe, for the preservation of the equilibrium of power. As soon as we look at the question with serious attention, we are forced to admit that any general application of the principle of nationalities, or of that of the great political unities, would throw the civilized world into such a confusion and fermentation as would be equally compromising to the internal liberties of nations, and to the preservation of peace between the different States.

What if I had to sound the consequences of another principle, the sovereign authority which men also seek in these days to set up, the

right, I mean, of populations, or of some part of a population, to dissolve the State with which they are connected, and to range themselves under another State, or to constitute themselves into new and independent States? What would become of the existence, or even of the very name of country, if it also were thus left to be dealt with according to the fluctuating wills of men, and the special interests of such or such of its members? There is in the destiny of men, whether of generations or individuals, a great part which they have no share in deciding or disposing of; a man does not choose his family, neither does he select his country; it is the natural state of man to live in the place where he is born, in the society where is his cradle. The cases are infinitely rare which can permit of the bonds being rent asunder by which man is attached to the soil, the citizen to the state; which can justify his leaving the bosom of his country, in order to separate himself from it absolutely, and to strive to lay the foundation of a

new country. We have just been spectators of such an attempt; we have seen some of the States which form the nation of the United States of America, abjure this union, and erect themselves into an independent confederation. Wherefore? In order to maintain in their bosom the institution of slavery. By what right? By the right, it is said, of every people, or portion of a people, to change its government at discretion. The States which remained faithful to the ancient American Confederation denied the principle and combatted the attempt. They succeeded in maintaining the federal Union, and in abolishing slavery. I am one of those who think that they had both right and reason on their side. Many years before the struggle commenced, one of the most eminent men in the United States, eminent by his character as well as his talents, a faithful representative of the interests of the States of the South, and an avowed apologist for negro slavery, Mr. Calhoun, did me the honour of transmitting to me all that he had written and

said upon the subject. I was struck by the frank and earnest language with which he expressed his convictions, but no less by the futility of the efforts which he made to justify, upon general considerations and by historical necessities, the fact of slavery in his country. He would never have dared to paint it in its actual and living reality, as Mrs. Beecher Stowe has done in her romances of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and of "Dred," which have everywhere excited so much sympathy and emotion. I became every day more and more convinced that there was here a radical iniquity and a social wound, of which it was at last time to efface the shame and to conjure the danger. It was with the motive of maintaining the system of slavery that the States of the South undertook to break up the great American State which was their country. Motive detestable for a deplorable act! Our epoch, so unfortunate in many respects, has, in my opinion, been fortunate in this, that it produced a Republic, the greatest of all Republics of ancient or of modern times, which

has afforded us the example of an uncompromising resistance to an illegitimate popular desire, and of an unflinching respect for the tutelary principles of the life of States.

So far of the territorial questions, and those which concern the external relations of nations. Let me now speculate upon what the future has in store for those which involve domestic order and the organization of government. I meet here with the same confusion, the same complications, the same fluctuations between ideas and essays incoherent or inconsistent. At the base as at the summit of society, the monarchy and the republic are in collision: the monarchy reigns in events; the republic ferments in opinions.

The proposition is now universally received that society has the right not only to see clearly and to intervene in its own government, but to see so clearly and to intervene in such a manner as to justify the expression that it governs itself. The Constitutional Monarchy and the Republic profess each to attain this object: the one by a

national representation, by the monarch's inviolability and his ministry's responsibility; the other by universal suffrage and the periodical elections of the great representatives of public power. But neither the constitutional monarchy nor the republic has as yet succeeded amongst us in obtaining firm possession of opinions and of events, of public confidence and of durable power. After and in spite of thirty-four years of prosperity, of peace, and of liberty, the constitutional power fell. The republic, accepted on its sudden appearance as the form of government which, as was affirmed, divided us least, after a few months of turbulent and sterile anarchy, fell also. In the place of the constitutional monarchy and of the republic there arose another form of government, a mixture of Dictatorship and of Republic, a sort of personal government combined with universal suffrage. Will the essay have greater success? Events will decide. In the meantime let us be sincere with ourselves; the cause of so many painful and abortive attempts

resides rather in the disposition of the people of France than in the acts of its governments: our revolutionary existence since 1789, our ambitious aspirings and disappointments, both equally immense, have left us at once very excited and very fatigued, full of impatience at the same time as of incertitude; we know not very well what we think or what we would have; our ideas are perplexed and confused; our wills vacillating and feeble; our minds have no fixed points, our conduct no determined objects; we often yield ourselves up readily against our better judgment, nay against our very wish, to whatever power extends its hand to seize us; but soon, very soon, we evince towards that power not a whit less exigency or unfairness; as soon as we feel ourselves rid of our most urgent cause for disquietude, our discontent is as precipitate as was our submission in the hour of peril. We are again disposed to be quarrelsome, and demand instant action in the midst even of our doubts and hesitation. Our revolutions have taught us

the lesson neither of resistance nor of patience. Yet these are virtues without which it is idle to propose to found any free government.

I pass from political questions to social questions, and from the state of our political institutions to that of the relations existent between the different parts of society. I say the *different parts* to avoid saying *different classes*, for we cannot hear the word class pronounced without thinking that we are threatened with the re-establishment of privileges and exclusions, of that entire *régime* with its narrow compartments and inseparable barriers within which men were formerly enclosed, and ranked according to their origin, their name, their religion, or whatever other factitious or accidental qualification they might possess. In effect, this *régime* has fallen—fallen completely and definitively; all legal barriers have disappeared; all careers are open; all labour free: by individual merit and by labour every man may aspire to everything, and examples abound in confirmation of the principle. This was the

great work, the great conquest of 1789; we celebrate it unceasingly, and we have often the air of forgetting that it ever occurred. The different ancient classes are still full of jealousy, of distrust, and of restless irritation; because they have to struggle for influence in the midst of liberty, they persuade themselves that they are still risking life and limb in defence of their situation and of their right. The Restoration was attacked and undermined on account, it was said, of the evils that the *bourgeoisie* had to endure, and the risks which it had to run at the hands of the nobles. Under the government of July, the working classes were told incessantly that they were the victims of the privileges and of the tyranny of the middle classes. Facts and actual events gave singularly the lie to such assertions. With what effect? In the hurry of passions and the intoxication of thought, men appealed to theories which had been already often produced on the stage of the world,—theories which have only served to agitate, never to satisfy it. Landed

property and capital, labour and wages, the artificial distribution of the means of material happiness amongst men, have served sometimes as the subjects of unjust recrimination, sometimes of chimerical expectations. Attacks were made upon things which the assailants had no right to take; and promises were made to give things which the promisers had not the power to give.

I have heard it remarked by clear-sighted men who are good observers, that this malady of the mind is decreasing, and that even amongst the labouring classes themselves, false notions as to the conflict of capital and labour, as to the artificial settlement of wages, and the intervention of the State in the distribution of the material means of existence, are in discredit, and that the ambitious aspirings of the people, although continuing to be very democratic, have ceased to assume the form of Socialism. I ardently wish it were so: the passionate feelings which find their field in facts affecting the sphere of material subsistence, are the rudest, the most rebellious, and the most

recalcitrant to the principles of the moral order: it is easier to deal with the aspirings of political ambition than with the ardent cravings for physical advantages. But I fear, I confess, that errors such as those which presented themselves under the names of Socialism and Communism, and which recently made so much noise, are not so discarded as we might hope them to be; that they are actually without a mouthpiece is not a sufficient proof of their defeat; materialism, and the evil instincts to which it leads or from which it springs, have penetrated very far amongst us, and a long period of social and moral progress in the midst of a society which has been well ordered will be necessary in order to surmount this danger.

Several years ago I put to a great manufacturer of Manchester, who had been Mayor of that immense centre of industry, the following question: "What amongst you is the proportion between the laborious and well-conducted workmen, who live respectably in their homes, set aside money in the 'savings' bank, and apply for books at the

people's library, and the idle and disorderly workmen who pass their time at taverns, and only work so much as is necessary to furnish them with the means of subsistence?" After a moment's reflection, he replied: "The former are two-thirds of the whole number." After congratulating him, I added, "Allow me to put one more question. If you had amongst you great disorders, seditious assemblages, and riots, what would be the result?" "With us, sir," he said without hesitation, "the honest men are braver than the ill-conditioned ones." I congratulated him this time still more.

In these questions I had touched the root of the evil which afflicts us. It is to their shortcomings in morality, to their disorderly lives, that we must attribute the favour with which the working classes receive the fallacious theories that menace social order. The condition of these classes is hard and full of distressing accidents; whoever regards it closely, and with a little fairness and sympathy, cannot fail to be deeply

moved by all the sufferings which they have to support, the privations from which they have no chance of escape, and the efforts which they must make to ensure themselves a living at best monotonous and full of hazard. The happy ones of the earth feel sometimes alarm and irritation, when they hear from the pulpit descriptions purer and more true to the life than are to be met with in philanthropical novels, of the precarious state and distresses of the lower orders. Beyond doubt, from pictures of this nature should be scrupulously excluded everything that would seem to excite sentiments of hostility, or that would set one class against another; still as the upper classes must resign themselves to the spectacle, it devolves more especially upon Christian Painters to place it before them. Nothing but strong moral convictions, and the habits of well living amongst the labouring classes, can furnish them with efficacious means of struggling against the temptations and resisting the ambitious yearnings, suggested to them by the

spectacle of the world which surrounds them,—a world now at length transparent to all, a world of which the stir, the noise, the accidents, the adventures, penetrate with rapidity even to the workshops of our cities and the remotest recesses of our villages. What influence shall protect the masses of the people from the irritating and demoralizing effect of such a sight, unless it be the influence of religious principles, the moral discipline which religion maintains, and the moral serenity which religion diffuses over the rudest existences and the lives subjected to the greatest privations? And it is precisely religious belief and religious discipline, Christian faith and Christian law, which are now being attacked and undermined, and this far more in the obscurer classes, than in the brilliant regions of society!

These attacks are of a general although of diverse nature, and of unequal violence; they occur in the bosom of Roman Catholicism, of Protestantism, and of scientific philosophy; some are

direct, open, impetuous; others indirect and full of reserves, and of a tenderness sometimes affected sometimes sincere. Christianity counts amongst its enemies fanatics who persecute it in the name of reason and of liberty, as well as adversaries who criticise it with moderation and prudence; the latter admit its practical deservings, are distressed by the wounds which they inflict, and, in the very act of dealing their blows, seek to lessen their force. This diversity of attack is a proof of the trouble, of the incertitude, and of the incoherence which reign in men's opinions, both upon religious questions and upon questions which are only simply political and social; many they are who would be inclined to save such or such a portion of the edifice which they are battering and seeking to destroy. But the upshot is, that all these blows are telling upon the same point, and are concurring to produce the same effect; it is the Christian Religion which receives them all; it is the right and the empire of Christ which, in the world

learned and unlearned, is subjected to doubt and exposed to peril.

I have touched upon all the great questions which are agitating the human mind and human societies: questions of public right, questions of political organization, questions of social institutions, questions of religious belief. Everywhere I encounter two facts, facts everywhere the same: a great complication and a great incertitude in man's opinions and in his efforts. Nothing is simple, no one decided. Problems of every kind—doubts of every kind weigh upon the thoughts of men, and oppress their wills; their ambitious aspirings are varied, immense, but everywhere they hesitate. They may be likened to travellers already exhausted with fatigue, yet feebly striving to feel their way through a labyrinth.

Are we then to infer that we are living in an era of decay and impotence? that we have nothing ourselves to do, nothing to hope for, in this situation so complicated and so obscure?

that we have only to wait until our lot is decided by that sovereign power called by some Providence, by others Fate ?

I am far from thinking so.

Of the men distinguished by singleness of views and strength of convictions whom I have known, I consider the Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr in these respects the most remarkable. He was one day detailing his reasons for disapproving of the system of a royal or imperial guard, or of privileged corps, in an army: "Few," said he, "are really brave: the best thing to be done is to disseminate them in the ranks, where each singly, by his presence and example, will make eight or ten more brave men around him." I am no judge as to the value of the Marshal's maxim in a military sense; I do not believe it to be invariably true, or always applicable in the political sense; there are epochs at which, in order to further the progress of which a nation stands in need, to withdraw it from its embarrassments or to rouse it from its apathy, the most urgent thing to be done, and the plan the

most efficacious, is to form in its bosom picked bodies of men (the number is immaterial), and then to incorporate with them others possessing distinguished qualities, and animated by the same spirit, decided in their opinions, and resolute in their action, single of purpose, and full of confidence: these would soon attract to themselves as associates many others who would never, without such impulse, begin to move in the same path. We are, I believe, at an era which calls for such a mode of influencing society, and which authorises us to expect success if we adopt it.

I can never be accused of ignoring or extenuating the evil which torments us upon all the points which I have just indicated, the rights of nations, the civil organization of society and its economy, moral and religious belief. In all these directions an evil wind is blowing, an evil current is hurrying away a part of French society, and it is my constant design so to arouse the moral sense of the people, and its good sense, as to make them attentive to the existence of the

ill, and solicitous for its removal. But at the side of this fact, so deplorable and so full of peril, a fact of contrary and salutary nature is occurring and developing itself: a good wind there also is which is blowing, a good current which is impelling us forwards;—at the same time that violent and revolutionary theories are being diffused, the principles of legal order, and of liberties, serving mutually to control and check one another, are proclaimed and maintained; the maxims and the sentiments of the spirit of peace are heard at least as loudly pronounced, as the *souvenirs* and the traditions of the spirit of adventure and conquest; the sound principles of political economy have defenders no less zealous than the presumptuous and dreamy theories of Socialism; Spiritualism raises its voice high at the side of Materialism; Christianity is advancing at the same time as Incredulity, and with a progress also distinguished by its scientific method and its practical applications. Following respectively their different objects, there are on both

sides groups of men of strong convictions, activity, and influence, who hope for and pursue the triumph of their several causes. Like the ardent huntsman of Bürger's ballad, France is solicited by two Genii, ever at her side, ever present, urgent, contrary. Since the commencement of the nineteenth century, our history is made up of this great struggle and of its vicissitudes, of the series of victories gained and defeats sustained by these two forces, which are disputing the future of our country.

They find a field of action in a people of quick, various, and keen feelings, prone to generous impulses, full of human sympathies and mobility, at this moment chilled and intimidated by the checks imposed upon their ambitious yearnings, by the disappointments which have befallen their hopes, and so brought back by actual experience to confine their aspirations within the modest limits of good sense; more occupied with the perils of their situation than with the rights of thought, but always remarkable for in-

telligence and sagacity; friendly to liberty even when they dread its abuse, and to order although they only defend it at the last extremity; more touched by virtue than shocked by vice; honest in their instincts and moral judgments in spite of the weakness of their moral belief and their complacent indulgence of men whom they do not esteem; and always ready, in spite of their doubts and their alarms, to recur to the noble desires which they have the air of no longer entertaining.

We have in all this evidently matter to encourage the good genius of France. The life of nations is neither easier nor less mixed with good and evil, with successes and reverses, than the life of individuals; but assuredly, in spite of what is wanting to it, and in spite of its sorrows, the actual state of our country, as well as its long history, open a wide field to the efforts and the hopes of the men of elevated, resolute, and honest minds, who are occupying themselves in earnest with its destiny.

What, in order to attain their object, can be, ought to be, the conduct of the men engaged in this patriotic design, men who have it at heart to second the good current and to stem the evil current, which have both set in amongst us? Upon what conditions and by what means can we hope to pass through the sieve of good sense and of moral sense the confused ideas which plague us, and to find an issue for the public out of the doubts and hesitation which are a source of languor and enervation to the soul?

Political Liberty and Belief in Religion, the movement of society in advance and the impulse of the soul towards eternity, Free Government and Christianity, these are the two forces to which we should recur, and the only ones capable of remedying this disease of trouble and doubt which afflict both our thoughts and our conduct, and which at one time impairs, at another paralyses, our understanding.

I have no intention here to speak of political

liberties in the abstract, and of their necessity either to a country in order to guarantee to it a good administration at home and abroad, or to individuals in order to secure their interests, moral and material. The right of France to these liberties, and their opportuneness to her at this moment, have recently been set in their clearest light, and established in all their force on their highest stage, in the bosom of the legislative body.* It is solely because of its influence upon that ill of our epoch, the complication of questions and the hesitations of opinion, that I speak here of political liberty; I regard it as one of the two great remedies against this ill.

When all questions are agitated pell mell, and all minds are perplexed, the first salutary result consequent upon liberty is that it sets all opinions and all intentions in contact and in conflict. At first, and for a time, this simultaneous invasion

* Discourse of M. Thiers, *Sur les libertés nécessaires et sur la liberté de la presse*, in the séances of the 11th January, 1864, 13th February, 1866, 30th January, 7th, 8th, 15th, 21st, and 22nd February, 1868.

of so many complex facts, and of so many diverse and contrary ideas, does but add to the perplexity of the questions and to the confusion of minds; but little by little, and quickly too, provided liberty endures, the winnowing process produces its effect upon the questions, and light penetrates into the understandings: the different facts, and problems which these facts suggest, are set in turn in their place, and valued only for as much as they are worth; actors and spectators grow accustomed to them all, and begin to form more precise conceptions of them.

Little by little order takes the place of confusion; opinions define and classify themselves; and instead of the fermentation of opinions in a chaotic confusion, we have a contest in regular form, and upon intelligible issues. I repeat that a result so salutary cannot be obtained unless upon the condition of a liberty universal, real, and durable; partial or transitory, it would serve only to aggravate

the perturbation, and to unsettle opinions still more.

Political liberty has a second effect, one, perhaps, still more important: it forces all questions to submit to the test of practical experiment. As long as the liberty is only in the thought, it is vain and intemperate; everything seems permitted, and everything possible to those who are not responsible for the effects of an act: man's thought, intoxicated with itself, runs riot in the vagueness of infinite space and time. But when to liberty of thought is superadded political liberty,—when, instead of treating questions speculatively, they have to be virtually solved,—when men are charged as real actors to transform into facts their own opinions or those of the spectators who are looking on,—then it is that the human mind, making its own strength the object of its reflection and examination, is driven to the admission that it does not dispose at its own will of the world, and that even in order to satisfy itself, it must confine itself to the

limits imposed by good sense, by justice, and by possibility, — then it is that it learns to govern itself, and to hold itself responsible for its acts. Responsibility engenders discretion, but is itself engendered by liberty alone.

Our own times have furnished us with three great examples of the salutary empire exercised by political liberty in furnishing an escape from the embarrassment of situations, and in solving questions the most different—I might say the most contrary—in their nature. We have only to cast our eyes over the contemporary histories of England, of the United States of America, and of France herself, to discover their examples and their authority as precedents.

From 1792 to 1818, England was engaged in struggles first against the spirit of Revolution, and then against that termed by M. Benjamin Constant the spirit of usurpation and of conquest. With what forces and with what arms did England support these two formidable struggles? With the forces and the arms of

political liberty. It was by the elections, by publicity, by discussions continued in the midst of the energetic manifestations of all the parties, —it was by appeals to public sentiments and opinions,—it was by setting in action all the springs of a free and representative government, that England succeeded in her resistance to the most potent revolutionary and military movement which ever agitated Europe. That struggle over, after the lapse of a few years, during which the presiding policy prolonged its tenure of office by pursuing a pacific course, England entered upon quite a different path; sometimes under the Government of Liberals, sometimes of Conservatives, the policy of Reform took the place of the policy of resistance; and since 1828, it is in this path that England is progressing; it is in favour of innovations, sometimes prudent, sometimes daring, and sometimes, perhaps, improvident, that she is exerting to the utmost all the forces of the country, all the strength of its government. Political Liberty has in turn, and with similar

efficacity, served the cause and assured the success, at one time of a policy of resistance, at another of that of progress.

The United States of America have been subjected to a still ruder trial. Their government has had to struggle against the insurrection of a notable portion of their people, and against a civil war entered upon in the name of a principle, popular independence. The central power of the Confederation has resisted an insurrection radically illegitimate, which was entered upon to maintain the slavery of a part of the human race; it defended the national existence of the State against the attempts which were made to dislocate it, and which were founded upon the same motive; and after a civil war which endured four years, in the course of which each side was prodigal of efforts and sacrifices, and displayed an equal energy, the policy of resistance triumphed by the medium of a republican power, and the liberal idea of the abolition of slavery vanquished the revolutionary idea of the right

of insurrection. It is to political liberty, and to the potent force of the institutions and manners founded under her influence, that this victory of the great right of humanity was due; and, the war once over, the civil *régime* of American society resumed its action, still stormy and perilous, but free from every anarchical usurpation or military tyranny.

Newer to France, its principles less understood by it, and not so well applied, Political Liberty has not on these accounts remained without producing there some fruits. In 1830 and in 1848 France passed through two revolutions, one of which had been preceded by sixteen the other by eighteen years of civil liberty. Neither of the *régimes* in operation immediately previous to each revolution sufficed to prevent it, but they greatly changed its character and weakened its effects. In 1830, thanks to the instantaneous intervention of the public authorities which owed their existence to the previous *régime*, a regular government was promptly established, and a new

constitutional monarchy succeeded to that which had just fallen. On the instant it set itself in opposition to the revolutionary movement which had given it birth; but the principle of respect for the Law and for Liberty exercised, as yet, so incomplete and feeble an empire upon men's minds, that the anarchical fermentation of opinions prolonged themselves even after the victory. The doctrine of Religious Liberty, in particular, was more than once lost sight of and violated: in February, 1831, the funeral ceremonies in the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, celebrated in commemoration of the Duke de Berri, who had been assassinated eleven years previously, was not allowed to be tranquilly celebrated; a violent and riotous mob sacked the archiepiscopal palace of Paris, and was the cause of the church, which had furnished them with a pretext for violence, being closed for many months. In 1848, on the contrary, during a revolutionary crisis which set men's passions far more furiously in movement, and which was more profound than

that of 1830, neither the liberty of Religion nor the peace of the churches was disturbed; the ruling authorities were exposed to anarchy for a longer period, but the rights of the individual were respected, and he might affirm himself free even in the midst of the public troubles and perils. Thirty-four years of civil Liberty have not disappeared with the governments which were then in force without leaving their traces; their traditions and their examples have evidently exercised a salutary influence both upon the last Revolution, and upon the Reaction which put an end to it.

That this influence may still surmount the great trials through which governments and people may have both to pass, two things are necessary: the one is, that civil liberty should form real citizens, that nations as well as governments should learn to make use of their rights, and to submit to the limits imposed by their laws; the other is, that each country and ruling power, at the same time that they are culling the fruits of civil liberty, should accept its inconveniences and its perils. A

free government is not exempt from either vices or dangers; it does not dispense men from the necessity of contemplating with resignation the imperfection of every work of man as well as of every human situation.

Free institutions are not of themselves enough: they leave room to nations for—what do I say? they demand from them—great activity and much responsibility. If nations strive to elude their part of responsibility and omit to exercise their share of action, free institutions become idle words; they are no longer anything but a picture-frame without the picture—a drama written, not represented—in which the actors fail to assume their parts or to co-operate to produce the *dénouement.*

It is the absolute necessity of this co-operation of the public in the life of free government which gives so capital an importance to the popular beliefs, moral and religious. When I say beliefs, moral and religious, I attach to the word a sense at once the largest and most positive: these beliefs may have different dogmas and different

internal organizations; I am not one of those who believe that Romanists are necessarily hostile to civil liberty, or that the doctrine of the right of private judgment impels Protestants inevitably to anarchy. What is indispensable is, that in their diversity the beliefs styled moral and religious should be beliefs really moral and religious—beliefs which recognize and attest that man is naturally moral and religious, and which assign to man something essentially to distinguish him from the material world in the midst of which he lives, in short a soul. Nations animated by such beliefs are the only ones which accept really under a free *régime* a large share both of its responsibility and of its active duties: it is only when so animated that they give consequently to civil Liberty the potent support of which it stands in need, for it is only then that they seriously believe in the existence of moral Liberty. The world has seen more than once how feeble and precarious an affection men feel for liberty when they no longer believe in the human soul; and with what a tame complacency,

when they regard themselves as an ephemeral combination of material elements, they submit to the empire of the material forces which assail them. Many in these days are of opinion that it is enough in a free country if religious beliefs are freely practised by those who profess them, and externally respected by others, and that all which can be expected from them is an indirect influence in favour of the maintenance of order. But this is a complete misapprehension of the great facts of nature and of human society. There are two things which never fail finally to prove incompatible, Liberty and Falsehood. Whether from prudence or in tenderness for the opinions of those who surround him, a man isolated in position may preserve silence, or may utter even a falsehood as to what he thinks and believes respecting the supreme questions concerning Man's nature and Man's destiny; this is possible, for such cases are seen; a single isolated individual is so paltry a thing, and passes so quickly, that his silence or his falsehood can exercise but little influence upon

the vast ocean of society in which he is plunged: but the falsehood or the silence of a free people from feelings of respect or of prudence cannot be regarded as possible; their opinions and their sentiments concerning the supreme questions of humanity manifest themselves necessarily, and carry with them in such manifestation their natural and logical consequences. To engage a free people to treat with tenderness and respect, to refrain from contesting, perhaps even to reduce to practice, moral and religious beliefs in which it does not itself believe, is to give to it not only a very discreditable but a very impracticable counsel. Liberty in the domain of civil society calls for and infallibly induces veracity in the region of the intellect; a free country can never escape in its public and practical life from the effectual influence of any ideas, whether moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, which may happen to be fermenting and spreading themselves abroad in the minds of the people.

I leave generalities and call things by their

proper names; in all that I have just said respecting beliefs moral and religious, it is of Christianity that I am thinking. That Christianity on the one hand is necessary to the firm establishment of civil Liberty amongst us, and on the other hand is very reconcilable with the principles and the rights of modern society, is what I have at heart to establish in the series of Meditations which I am now publishing.

I do not deceive myself by imagining that it will be an easy task to effect this reconciliation, and to restore at the present day to Christianity, the object of so many attacks, that influence of which the interests most dear to us, Liberty as well as Order, stand equally in need. Still, I believe that success is not only here possible but infallible. I was speaking just now of two contrary currents which had set in in the domain of intellect as well as of Politics, and which lead to the formation of groups profoundly different, Conservatives and Revolutionists, Liberals and Radicals, Spiritualists and Materialists, Christians

and Disbelievers. No one of these groups really represents a dominant party in France: amidst them and around them there is a scattered and hesitating population, sometimes heedless, sometimes anxious, vacillating alternately between innovations and its traditions, wearied of its agitations and of its doubt, and not seeing clearly the quarter from which shall come that government of truth, of liberty, and of order, which is to give repose to man's thoughts and life and enable him again to rise. In this confused and wavering multitude there are to be found men whose ways of thinking, whose desires, and sometimes whose tastes, are, to appearance, very decided, but whose opinions or wills are in reality neither clear, determined, nor pronounced. We have here a vast field open to all the winds, accessible to every labourer, a field ever fertile, and, although harassed by various and incoherent attempts, still a field only demanding good seed to bear an abundant harvest.

If we sound the depths of French society in all directions, and study it in all its elements and

under all its aspects, we shall find it to be as I have here described it. Above and below, in all classes and parties, amongst the powerful and the humble, the learned and ignorant, we shall find everywhere, on one side groups of persons of resolute purposes, devoting their activity to the service of opinions and causes the most contrary; on the other a wavering, vacillating crowd, in search of a path to follow, and impelled, perhaps, in the most different directions. Upon this population it is that we must act; it is amongst them that there are immense and decisive conquests to make; good aspirations, moral and religious instincts, those necessary preliminaries to faith in Christ, are by no means wanting; but to conduct them to their goal, to transform them into positive and effectual convictions, we must accommodate ourselves to the general character of this population; we must be of our time, and speak its language; an adequate satisfaction must be offered, and a necessary confidence must be inspired, before we can expect that a population,

anxious to ensure the rights and the interests of its new life, should give in return its soul. It is not a complacent indulgence that I am counselling, it is not concessions that I ask from the contemporary defenders of Christianity; what their mission demands is, that they should know, that they should comprehend, that they should love the society to which they are addressing themselves, and that they should zealously occupy themselves with it to rally it under their banner, not to cast it prostrate or to humiliate it under their blows.

Not only must their work have this character, but when it has it prospers, and the nineteenth century has seen instances of such success. I shall only cite two, which occurred at different epochs, and in which the modes of action were different. Why did Chateaubriand and the Father Lacordaire exercise upon their times, and especially upon the youth of their times, so extraordinary an influence? First, because the awakening of Christianity which they provoked was a thing in harmony with the popular

instincts, but also because, in the midst of the religious reaction of which they were the organs, they each of them, by degrees and by different processes, respectively inspired the France of their days with the sentiment that they were its children and its friends, that they shared its new aspirations, that they accepted its political transformation, and that it was not in order to reconstitute it on its ancient basis that they wished it to be Christian. They more than once astounded, disquieted, even shocked their country, the one by his political career, the other by his monastic zeal; still their popularity continued, and they influenced it, the one by causing Christianity to resume her place in the modern literatures of France, the other notwithstanding his having re-established in France the monastic orders. The reason of this is, that in spite of the prejudices which it entertained against them, and the opinions in which it differed from them, France felt itself understood and honoured by them; it rejoiced in their glory, because it believed in their sympathy.

Men such as M. de Chateaubriand and the Father Lacordaire are rare; but the spirit which animated them, the comprehension of their age and country which distinguished them, did not die with them, nor are they without successors in their work of religion and patriotism. Beyond a doubt the Faith of Christ and the Church of Rome have in our days had no champion more eloquent and more liberal than M. de Montalembert, and worthily the Father Hyacinthe occupies the pulpit from which once resounded the voice of the Father Lacordaire. At the side of these names, already more than once cited by me, I see others start up of a different origin and with a different physiognomy, but devoted to the same cause and to the same work. At the very moment at which I am terminating these Meditations, two compositions meet my eye, published by men, neither of whom I have the honour to know, men very different in position and in ideas: the one a Romanist, the other a Protestant, the one a great Prelate in his Church, the

other a simple Pastor in his; both firm Christians, and both sympathizers with the instincts, the aspirations, and the moral and intellectual ideas prevalent in the present state of French society; both having the resolution and the ability required in order to present Christianity to Frenchmen under the form and in the language most proper to make it penetrate the soul. The one is Monseigneur Darboy, the Archbishop of Paris, the other, M. Decoppel, pastor at Alais. The former has just addressed to the clergy of his diocese, (Lent, 1868,) *A Pastoral Letter upon the Truth of Christianity.** The second presented, on the 7th of November in the previous year, to the National Evangelical Conference assembled at Nérac, *A Report as to the Actual Requirements of Preachers in the Protestant Churches.*† I was struck, in spite of their diversity, by the substantially analogous character of these two docu-

* This Pastoral Letter was published at full length in the *Gazette de France*, on the 25th and 26th of February, 1868.

† This report was published, at Toulouse, by the Society for the Publication of Religious Books, 1868.

ments, and I cite them here because I would set in a clear light the great fact which each reveals, that a general and contemporaneous work is now being prosecuted in order to maintain and re-establish the harmony between the Christianity of former ages and the spirit of the present century, a work of which the mission is to solve, as far as the solution can rest with man, the question whether our epoch is Christian.

"Religion," says the Archbishop of Paris, "is a fact that was contemporary with primitive man—a fact present in all ages, ever paramount, ever visible, although not everywhere to the same degree. Never was there wanting in the world a voice to remind man of the truths of Religion, whether it proceeded from the tent of the Patriarch, the synagogue of the Jew, or the church of the Catholic; whether it was heard in the whisperings of a simple and upright conscience, or emanated from legislators or prophet raised up by Heaven, or was the voice of God himself incarnate, constituting Himself the preceptor and the

model of His creatures, humanity was never so imperfect as that these lofty lessons did not draw forth from the generously faithful responses more or less unanimous.

"Heathen nations—their history proves it—have preserved something of these hopes and of the religious dogmas connected with them. The grandsons of Noah, in dispersing in the plains of Sennaar, convey to the four quarters of the earth the traditions which they received from their grandsire, and which are the common patrimony of the human race. Doubtless these traditions are gradually altered and deformed by the vain intermixtures of fables, which owe their origin to the dreamers of the far East and to the poets of Greece and of Rome; but in the eyes of the multitude, and particularly of those who are its superiors and its governors, the grand features of the truth are readily distinguishable. Thus, the existence of God and the action of Providence, the distinction of good and of evil, the original fall of man and the necessity for an atonement,

the immortality of the soul, the rewards and punishments of another life; all these doctrines, more or less disfigured, it is true, live in the depths of the conscience of the people. Even Pagans have their souls by nature Christian, which testify in favour of justice and virtue; and if Pagans are to be condemned, says St. Paul, it is not for having ignored God, but for having neglected to serve Him and to glorify Him.

"At an era nearer to ourselves, three centuries ago, a sorrowful work was accomplished. Theological disputes led to religious wars, and by a tearing asunder of ties which it is impossible too much to deplore, Europe divided itself into Catholics and Protestants. But in spite of this fatal resolution it remained Christian, although not in the same degree. Their political charters and institutions, their civil laws and social habits, breathe all of Christianity; and the character of their baptism remains stamped upon their foreheads, which it for ever ennobles.

"And now this fact, which is the common work

of so many generations, made up of beliefs expressed in every kind of manner and sometimes practised even to heroism, written in books sacred and profane, engraved on marble and on brass, in institutions and in laws, in the mind and in the heart of nations—this fact, what is its moral value, and what its bearing? Are we to be told that it is purely natural—the spontaneous production of our habits, the simple result of our instincts—and, so to say, an irrepressible necessity of mankind? Even in this case it is divine, as divine as our nature itself, which was directly created by God; and so we must recognise and respect Religion as a thing true, necessary and divine. It is reason, it is common sense which tells us this.

"But there is more than that, my very dear brethren. This fact, as it presents itself, so general and so constant, is not merely the common work of the races of mankind. Our nature, left to its own resources and its proper energy, is incapable of producing it and of continuing it with a brilliancy

that so endures, and with a force which renews itself every day. It is also, it is more especially the providential and prodigious effect of a cause to which all of us are subject, men and nations, and which here shows itself that it is so by giving to its effects a supernatural character.

Supernatural means were necessary, that is to say, a continual action of God always in relation to the varying exigencies of each different age, and the constant requirements of humanity, in order that the person of the Revealer having disappeared, and His direct action being no longer visible, His teachings, His spirit, and His institutions should be maintained in the world in a manner authentic, infallible, and triumphant. In a single word, there was necessary a perpetual assistance of God, accrediting the mission of His envoys by extraordinary facts—facts of a superhuman power, miraculously protecting their work against the consequences of the weaknesses of some and of the perversity of others, intervening with supernatural *éclat* to enable the mission to develop itself

amongst nations incessantly, to act more and more efficaciously upon them in spite of their shortcomings and their revolts, and to aid them and to support them in their religious and predestined course.

"This paramount action, this divine action, is manifested in the highest degree in Religion. After the miracles and the prophecies of ancient times, after the Jewish nation, whose history is a prophecy and one unceasing miracle, Christianity appears with signs so supernatural that it is impossible for us to deceive ourselves. Miraculous agency appears at every turn. The Saviour, and what he affirms concerning himself, His discourses, His character and His actions, the difficulties of His undertaking, the marvels of wisdom and sanctity which He accomplished; finally, the survival and the development of His work through centuries; everything here forces us to recur to the fact of the direct intervention of God—sole possible means of finding a satisfactory explanation of such grand results."

The circular letter is throughout but a development of the ideas recapitulated in the passages of the text which I have cited—a development sometimes so prudent and so little precipitate as to assume the character of extreme circumspection, yet always faithful to the same thought. The writer indulges in no discussion purely theological, makes no pompous display of ecclesiastical authority, engages in no polemics with any class of dissent. When I affirm that we have here the History of Humanity, a correct appreciation of the ideas and behaviour of man in his different stages; Religion in general and Christianity in particular; considered as a grand fact—a fact universal and permanent, traceable everywhere and in all times, even amongst the heathens; a fact which survived all the divisions, the scientific struggles, and the civil wars which took place amongst Christians themselves, particularly amongst Roman Catholics and Protestants, all of whom are Christians, according to the writer, by the same title, if not in the same degree; a fact at once human

and divine—human by its accordance with man's nature, divine by the direct and supernatural action of God, of God the creator, personal, free, whose presence and power reveal themselves, now by the general and permanent order of events, now by special miracles, judged by Him necessary for the accomplishment of His designs; the Christian faith thus associated with the whole life of the human race; the principle of the supernatural and miraculous, as well as the dogmas of Christianity, proclaimed aloud, but without controversy, without any appeal made to any external or exclusive dominion; homage rendered to the right of the "conscience simple and upright" at the same time as to the biblical traditions and to the authority of the Church: when I affirm that all this is here, am I not justified in also affirming that Christianity is here presented under an aspect the least likely to shock opponents, the most proper to rally the minds of the hesitating? Is it not in effect, on the part of a Prince of the Church of Rome, the acceptance and pursuit of that great work of harmony between

the Christian Religion and Modern Society, which is manifesting itself in so many analogous manners and under banners so very diverse?

The pastor of Alais chooses a subject more limited, but is more vivid in thought and more incisive in manner than the Archbishop of Paris. It is not the general history of Christianity which he traces; it is its actual state, its religious bias and requirements in the nineteenth century which he observes and describes. His Report is no work of philosophy, but is penetrated and animated throughout by a real liberalism. He does not go in search of polemics: on the contrary, he recommends little use to be made of them; but when the occasion or the necessity is there, he does not evade it, but enters upon the arena unhesitatingly and without compromise.

"There are," he says, "exigencies upon which all men concur in insisting, and these depend upon the general state of men's minds in our epoch. Each age has its ideas and its sentiments, its prejudices and its doubts, a certain moral physiognomy which the

preacher encounters more or less in our congregations. Our auditors, perhaps we are too prone to forget this, do not live isolated from their contemporaries; they are of their time, they inhale its intellectual and moral atmosphere, they follow its movement, they share in its shortcomings and in its aspirations. We may indeed affirm that now more than ever men are of their time, thanks to the rapidity with which ideas circulate and diffuse themselves. Although men read less in France than in many other countries, they read more than they did formerly. In France, for good or for evil, there are influences at work which have to be taken into account. One of our first duties, as preachers, is, then, to know our age, to be attentive to every symptom which can reveal to us its spirit and its tendencies. To neglect this duty is to expose ourselves to the risk of addressing, so to say, fictitious auditors, that is, men who neither have the ideas nor feel the sentiments, nor think of the objections which we attribute to them.

"In the midst of the discordant voices heard

now-a-days, it is easy, alas! to distinguish one high above the others—it is that of incredulity; not as in the last century, marked by a raillery or levity, but by an earnestness and a high tone, occasionally even by a certain melancholy, and being for these very reasons more seductive. It is in favour of the progress of liberty, of the dignity of the soul, that is to say, of everything which is noblest and most sacred to man, that that voice addresses our generation, and invites it to bid for ever adieu to the faith of its infancy. These sad words, which pretend to toll the knell of Christianity, express but too faithfully the incredulity dominant now-a-days in the elevated regions of science and of thought, whence it is diffused over all the classes of society. It is impossible to deceive ourselves; we are now in presence of a fresh and a great conspiracy, not only against the faith of Christ, but against every religious faith. The leaders of incredulity proclaim aloud that the cycle of Religions is definitively closed, and that we have, once for all, to efface God from our thoughts and from our lives,

just as if God were an obsolete hypothesis, with which modern science has nothing to do.

"This Atheism is so much the more dangerous and contagious in these days, that it does not appear in the shape of a mere revolt or falling off of the mind, but as a generous doctrine, having for objects the enfranchisement of nations, and their delivery from the yoke of priests and of tyrants, who, it is supposed, are combined in order to prey upon them. One of its principal adepts, Guillaume Marr, exclaimed, a few years ago: 'The faith in a personal and living God is the origin, the fundamental cause of the miserable state of society in which we exist. The idea of a God is the key-stone of the arch of the decayed and worm-eaten civilization. Away with it! The true road to liberty, equality, and happiness, is Atheism. There is no hope for the earth so long as man shall cling to heaven by even a thread. . . . . Let nothing henceforth stand in the way of the spontaneous action of the human understanding. Let us teach man that he has no other

God than himself, that he is himself the alpha and omega of all things, the being paramount, and the reality most real.'

"Thus contemporary Atheism seeks to conquer the masses by their weak side, by their democratical and liberal instincts. This is not a mere system; it is a powerful party which has its lecturers, its newspapers, its associations, its congresses, and its Propaganda. A man of earnest meaning, M. Pearson, estimated at 640,000 copies the number of publications avowedly atheistical which appeared in England in the course of the year 1851. And it is not only in England that Atheism is raising its head, it is in France, Germany, and Italy.

"Far from me the idea of setting in the same category our Radical Reformers, and the disbelievers and free thinkers who seek to destroy every faith and all religion! Let us hope that the former never will go so far as these. But, definitively, they openly extend to them a sympathizing hand; they greet their writings with marked

favour; and, say it we must, when they go so far as to deny the supernatural, stripping thus Christianity of every divine authority, or when merely they proclaim the unimportance of dogmas to a religious life, they are making common cause with Atheism, and working, without suspecting that they are doing so, at the same work of destruction.

"But although we have all this to deplore, how many subjects have we for hope and encouragement! Moments of crisis are the most painful, but they are not the least fruitful. Sow we do, indeed, with tears; what matters, after all, that no hymn of triumph attends our harvest. The thing essential is that we sow. Behold, how magnificently the ground is in many respects prepared for the Christian preacher. The mere fact that religious questions are the fashion of the day gives us an immense advantage, and one by which we may profit. Is it not very encouraging to know that in discussing such subjects we are answering to serious demands of general interest?

The contest which divides our churches has been certainly hurtful to the growth of piety; but has it not also shaken many a soul from its torpor? Has it not impelled many persons to search after the truth who were before indifferent? Is it not better to have to address ourselves to souls troubled if only by doubt, than to souls plunged in the heavy torpor of indifference?

"After all, our age has its grandeur. Let us not underrate it: we are not to imitate that ready and vulgar pessimism, which sees everything dressed in the livery of woe, and which delights to note the vices and shortcomings of an epoch, without admitting the virtue to which it can lay just claim, or its generous aspirations. It is certain that, even where rejecting the dogmas of Christianity, our age has made immense progress in the social application of Christianity, and especially in philanthropy. The age passionately loves liberty, equality, tolerance, and peace; it insists upon respect for all consciences; it dreams of the union of all nations; it occupies itself with the

material happiness and the amelioration of all classes in society. Not so rich as other ages in men of a high temper of character, men really original, our age has nevertheless contributed, more than others, perhaps, to the general awakening of men to their rights as individuals, and of *self-government*, and consequently, to the sentiment of personal responsibility. Here assuredly we have noble tendencies; precious *points d'appui* for the preachers of the Gospel. Let us feel no dread for this breath of Liberalism which is passing over nations. Liberty rightly understood leads to the Gospel, as the Gospel leads to Liberty.

"And now what have we to say to this age so tormented? What ought we to say to these souls who have confidence in us, and who demand from us Light and Peace? How often has this question overwhelmed the Gospel preacher with the sentiment of his weakness and insufficiency? How often has it made him prostrate himself in his agony at the feet of the Lord? How

often torn from him the cry of the prophet—'Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child!'

"Let Christian Science proceed with its work! She has, assuredly, much to do in these days. In the teeth of the affirmations of Positivism and of Materialism let her make her own affirmation. Hers the task to show that the biblical dogmas respecting the origin of the world and of man are infinitely more rational and more scientific than all that in these days men seek to substitute in their place. Hers the task to prove that the supernatural, far from being antagonistic to the science of Nature, is as much called for by Nature as by the sentiment of Religion itself.

"Let Christian Philosophy also accomplish her task. Hers it is to establish the profound harmony which exists between Reason and Faith; hers to show that the systems by which men seek to replace Christianity present to the thought as many difficulties, if not more, than

any which follow from the evangelical dogmas. Hers the task to lay the foundation of a new philosophy with the materials furnished by Revelation, and by the Christian Conscience.

"Let Christian Literature equally accomplish her mission! Let her spread the truth by the means, infinitely diverse, which the progress of the press has placed at her disposal! Let her make herself popular; let her put on all forms to combat error; let her oppose Journal to Journal, Review to Review; and, if it must be so, Novel to Novel! Let her make herself everything to everybody; and follow the adversary upon every field, and seize all his arms.

"And for us Preachers, what have we to do? What this day is our special mission in the special position in which God has placed us?"

Having come to this, the particular object of his study and of his Report, made by him to the Evangelical Conference of Nérac, M. Decoppel enters, as to the Mission and actual work of

the preachers, into details which although they are full of life, and evince the greatest practical knowledge, apply more especially to the Protestant Churches of France. Finally, he reverts to the general question of Christianity by a concluding remark of general application, but announcing a truth of both practical and urgent importance for all the Christian Churches.

"What is most essential," says he, "is not so much to defend Christianity, as to present it to our age, not as an enemy that comes to anathematize and to combat it, but as a friend that comes to raise it and save it. Beyond a doubt, we must not fear to lay stress upon Christian Truth, and to present it with its most salient angles and its austerest face in advance; but with anathemas and declamations we must have done. What most is necessary is, that we address a word of sympathy to the Age; we must show to it Christianity, I do not say so much in the aspect fitted to

inspire love as in the aspect in which it is loving. Regard St. Paul at Athens. He does not consider himself bound to confound the idolatry of his auditors; he does quite the contrary; he knows how to find in their idolatry itself a *point d'appui* for the Gospel. Let us do as he did; let us strive, we also, to find these *points d'appui*, those keystones upon which the edifice of faith may in these days be made safely repose. It is more especially true in our country that Christianity is not known for what it is, and the remark applies not only to the lower classes of society, but even to the educated classes, so that when they attack Christianity it is, as it were, an attack upon a thing unknown. The Age is liberal: let us show it that the Gospel is still more liberal, and that its liberality is of the genuine kind. The Age loves science, and demands a rational faith: let us show it that faith is sovereign reason, and cannot but profit by every conquest achieved by science. The Age aspires to make progress in every branch of

human activity: let us show it that all genuine progress is contained in the principles of the Gospel."

I make no more citations. I neither examine nor discuss any of the particular ideas, or phrases, or words which these two documents contain: I would solely draw attention to their main and common characteristic. These writings are not only Christian, but uncompromisingly Christian; at the same time, they aim at leading Christianity and Modern Society to understand each other, to accept each other mutually and freely, and to exercise, the one upon the other, such an action as shall be salutary to both. The authors are not authors, or orators, or amateurs in religion, or in philosophy; they are ecclesiastics by profession, belonging to different churches who are entering upon this war, regarded by each both as legitimate and necessary; who are labouring to draw to it the populations placed naturally under their influence; and are hoping, without doubt, that their efforts will be successful.

I think that they are right both in their hope and their endeavours, and knowing that outside of the groups of persons pledged to particular opinions or sides in the contests of religion and politics, there exists a vast population, uncertain and vacillating, now indifferent, now anxious upon the subject of religious questions and the relations of Christianity to Modern Society, I think that this population, which is, in effect, France, is capable of feeling religious emotions, of being informed and brought back to the great beliefs of Christianity as well as to a sentiment of the natural and necessary agreement between Christian faith and the principles of public Liberty. The profound desire which I feel, and the hope from which I will not part, of this great result, have induced me to give still greater development to these Meditations, and to risk them amidst the events, the issue of which is obscure, which are now crowding upon each other, and amidst questions, passions, and interests, to

which such subjects are all very strange. The more I consider the matter, the more I feel persuaded that France is not so little busied as she would appear to be with religious questions, and that in the midst of her languor and fluctuations she has a secret sentiment of their imperishable grandeur and their practical importance. If this, as I think, is, at bottom, the public disposition, I may consider myself well entitled to command attentive listeners. In the course of my long life, I have seen much and have done somewhat. I have taken part in the world's affairs. I have quitted it, and am no longer anything more than a spectator. For twenty years I have been essaying my tomb. I have gone down into it living, and have made no effort to issue forth again. Not only have I experience of the world, but nothing attaches me to it. Could I be still of some service to the two great causes, in my eyes but one, the cause of Christian Faith in men's souls, and the cause of Political Liberty in my country, I

should await with thankfulness, in the bosom of my seclusion, the dawn of that eternal day which "fools call death," says Petrarch :—

Quel che morir chiaman gli sciocchi.

GUIZOT.

PARIS,
April, 1868.

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MEDITATIONS ON CHRISTIANITY

IN ITS

RELATION TO THE ACTUAL STATE OF SOCIETY AND OPINION.

FIRST MEDITATION.

CHRISTIANITY AND LIBERTY.

THE passionate longing both of men and of nations in these days for Liberty and Equality, is a fact not only evident but dominant in modern civilization. Sometimes this desire has for its object Liberty only, sometimes Equality only, sometimes both simultaneously. Sometimes the desire is at once intelligent and respectable, sometimes nothing more than a blind and ill-regulated impulse. Sometimes the feeling displays itself

in revolutions, in which it develops itself in all its intensity; sometimes it fades away, and subsides amidst the reactions which those very revolutions have, by their calamities and excesses, called forth. At one time men vaunt that the problem is solved, at another they are discouraged, and pronounce it to be insolvable. But whether they vaunt or are discouraged, the passionate desire continues to exist, and the problem ever reappears. Such a state of opinion may be applauded or may be deplored; it may have incense showered upon it or it may be visited with malediction; but to escape from it is an impossibility. It remains a trial which humanity is condemned to pass through; it furnishes it with a task which it is bound to perform.

But it is not only this fact and this problem with which our epoch has to deal; at their side there is another not less important, the solution of which also falls within the mission of the age. Many of the friends of Liberty and Equality regard Christianity, and especially Roman Catho-

licism, as their greatest enemy. In his moments of perverseness and angry waywardness, Voltaire so treated it. Thousands of men, not only men of intelligence, but a multitude of others, obscure enough, still not deficient in activity, speak and act under the empire of the same idea; at one time brutal, at another hypocritical, the anti-Christian sentiment is at once ardent and far-spread. Is it well founded? Is Christianity, after all, the obstacle to the progress of Liberty and of Equality? Or is it not, on the contrary, rather true that both already owe much to Christianity, and that both require its sanction and its support to ensure their legitimate and durable triumph? The great question of the 19th century remains in suspense, and social order in peril, so long as that other question is not solved.

I meet at every step in the Gospels words such as these—"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *

* Mark viii. 36, 37.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." * "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." †

The dominant idea in the Gospels is the infinite worth of the human soul, of every human soul. Jesus came to influence and to save souls, all souls without exception,—souls of the powerful and of the obscure, of the rich and poor, learned and ignorant, happy or afflicted. The condition and the salvation of souls is the foundation of the Christian Religion.

The human soul is no mere word, no mere abstraction, no mere hypothesis; the soul is the human being himself, the individual being who feels and thinks, enjoys and suffers, wills and acts, who observes and knows himself, in the complexity of his actual condition, and to whom his destiny in remote futurity is an object of present solicitude. To those who confound soul and body,

* Matthew x. 28. † Mark xvi. 15.

and see in man only a product, an ephemeral form of matter, I have nothing to say. What have they to do with the words of the Gospel—with the immense value attached to a fugitive shadow, deceived according to them as to its own reality, and only appearing to lose itself forthwith in non-entity? It is Spiritualists and Christians who speak with propriety when they discourse in grand and elevated tones of the human soul; and if they so discourse it is because they see in every human soul a true being, a real and individual man, with the grandeur of man's nature and of man's destiny.

What constitutes the essential worth of the human being, of every human being, is, that he is free to act or not to act, and that he is morally responsible how he acts. Man believes essentially in the distinction of moral good and evil and in the obligation which this entails; he believes that he is at liberty to act up to it or not as he pleases, that he is responsible for the use which he makes of his liberty. It is because such is the nature of man, whether his own conduct is in conformity to

it or not, that the Gospel exalts man so high, and accords to him so sublime a destiny. Philosophers, Christian and anti-Christian too, have made great efforts, in my opinion ill-judged efforts, to solve the problem of man's liberty in relation to God's prescience; the Gospel recognises and proclaims human liberty without troubling itself about the problem of philosophy. The Christian Religion entirely rests upon the fact which it assumes, that man is a free and responsible being. Man's liberty is the point from which Christianity starts in all that she says to humanity, and in every command that she gives to humanity.

Christianity, then, is essentially liberal, in favour of all men, and of them as men; by her elementary and fundamental idea of man's nature, she founds his liberty upon the most solid basis and the broadest right that human thought can conceive. The most daring of the writers on public law never carried to so high a point as the Gospel has done either the native universal dignity of man's nature or the consequences derivable from this fact.

Christianity does not confine itself to this;—after having laid down the principle of Liberty, it gives to it the practical sanction which Liberty requires: it establishes the right of resistance to oppression. The priests and the chiefs of the synagogue at Jerusalem "commanded them (Peter and John) not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus;" but Peter and John answered them and said unto them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."* Having been again summoned before the high priest, who says to them, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name?" Peter replies, "We ought to obey God rather than men."† The multitude joins its acts of violence to the injunctions of the authorities. Stephen, the first Christian Deacon, avows his faith before the multitude, and falls the first martyr to the principle of Christian resistance.‡ The most zealous of the persecutors

* Acts iv. 18,19. † Acts v. 28, 29.
‡ Acts vii. 59.

of Stephen, Paul of Tarsus, who had become Christian, is, in his turn, stoned and left for dead by the multitude of Lystra and Iconium; in his turn he resists the multitude, and returns again to Lystra and Iconium, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith," and representing to them that it is by much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God.* Resistance to oppression is an essential principle of Christianity, and the definitive guarantee of Liberty.

It is the peculiar characteristic and honour of Christianity that it derives both the right of resistance to oppression, and the principle of even Liberty itself, not from the temporal and transitory interests of earthly life, but from the moral and eternal interests of the soul. At the same time that it affirms the principle of Liberty and proclaims its consequences, it equally affirms and proclaims the principles and rights of Authority. I have referred to this upon another occasion;

* Acts xiv. 19, 22.

when Jesus made that reply to the question of the Pharisees whether it was permissible or not to pay tribute to Cæsar, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's," he established in principle the distinction between the religious life and civil life, between the Church and the State. Cæsar has no right to intervene with his laws and material force, between the soul of man and his God; and on his side the faithful worshipper of God is bound to fulfil towards Cæsar the duties which the necessity of the maintenance of public order imposes.* It was by affirming and defending religious liberty, the highest and proudest of all liberties, that modern civilization commenced. The principle and right of liberty once deeply rooted in the soul, the flower and the fruit of this potent germ have strongly developed themselves in the course of ages, and expanded with more or less of promptitude and

* Meditations upon the Essence of Christianity, p. 278. London: 1864.

fecundity, according as the seasons were favourable or unfavourable; but upon the whole, history has confirmed the Gospel. Of all the Religions which have appeared in the world, Christianity is the only one which conquered by means of Liberty, and which was founded upon Liberty; the only one which has been able to assume and keep her place amidst the greatest diversity of social institutions, and which in them all, as exigencies required, accepted and supported at one time authority, at another liberty.

Even if I wished, it would be impossible for me in this place to refer to more than the general and evident facts of history. If I remount to the origins of the different religions, I observe that Christianity was the only one which did not appeal to force; she was the only one which did not employ force to issue forth from her cradle and to grow. During more than three centuries she alone combated and conquered her adversaries by vanquishing souls in the name of truth and by the arms of truth. If I interrogate the results, I

find that three great religious establishments—Paganism, Bouddhism, and Mahometanism—have held, and, with Christianity, still hold a great place in the world. Paganism, after some fair but brief moments of progress, attained to nothing but the anarchy of the Greek and Roman Republics, and the despotic decay of the Roman Empire. Bouddhism did nothing but generate the fantastic superstitions and the enervating abstractions of a pantheistic mythology, amidst the immobility of the castes and the stagnation of absolute power. Mahometanism carried into every quarter to which she penetrated only the yoke of force, the incurable animosity of races, the sterility of conquest. Christianity alone accepted the spirit of Liberty and Progress where she found it already existing in the soul of man and in human societies, and where she did not find it she awakened it.

Let me not be accused of forgetting that since the triumph of Christianity, oppressive tyrannies and odious persecutions have occurred in different Christian societies in the name of the Chris-

tian faith. No one more than I deplores and detests such facts. They were the work of the sins of men, not of the principles of Christianity, which, far from authorising them, condemns them. Water from the purest source is changed and polluted in its course over the surface of the earth, after it has been exposed to the stormy atmospheric influences. In creating man free, God left him a part and a share in his own destiny and in the events which determine it. Christianity, emanating from God, marks out and combats uncompromisingly all evil desires and bad motives, all the excesses and all the weaknesses of man's selfishness: she has not destroyed them; she did not at once restore innocence to man nor make him a present of virtue: he is bound to labour in the work of his own control and of his own reformation; the Gospel is a Mirror in which, if he looks at himself, he may, it is true, behold the stains upon his soul and upon his life, but those stains proceed from himself, and not from the mirror, which only enables him to see them. When we lay to

the charge of the Christian Religion the fatal errors, the unlawful passions and actions which have appeared under its name in the history of Christian Societies, we acquit without reason men, whether princes or nations, learned or ignorant, of the responsibility that weighs upon them ; we ignore what Christianity commands and what she forbids ; we demand from her that which she has not promised.

Of history thus far. I now confine myself to the present epoch and to the problems which the actual relations of Christianity to Liberty present. What are the principal obstacles at the present day in the way of the establishment of a real and lasting Liberty, and what are the means within our reach to surmount them ? In other terms, which express my meaning more exactly, What are our infirmities to retard, what our strength to accelerate, the establishment of a free government ? Is Christianity an obstacle to us in this work or a help, an ill or a remedy ?

It is with a profound feeling of sadness that

I see eminent men, men truly Christian, incessantly depicting in the most sombre colours society as it now exists, and representing it as only a prey to political and moral diseases now acute, now indolent, as deprived thereby of all title to respect, and of all hope of amelioration, incapacitated at one time for orderly life, at another for Liberty. As for straightforward attacks upon our vices and failings, our errors and shortcomings, I complain not of them however violent: nations as well as individuals require to be often admonished frankly and with severity; the rudeness which shakes them is more salutary than the indulgence which cradles them to sleep. But what I regret and deplore in the attitude and in the language of these worthy Christian Censors, is not that they scrupulously and unsparingly expose prevalent evils, our bad propensities, and our foolish pretensions; but that they ignore what good there is in us, the progress which we make, and the just and salutary results to which we are tending. The simultaneous presence, the profound inter-

mixture, of good and evil, of virtue and vice, of wisdom and folly, is the chronic sore of man and of human societies; this is no new fact, no evil which we are the first to endure and for which we are the first to be responsible; it is the old condition of the world as it appears from the constant testimony of History; each of its ages has incurred and has merited reproaches, not the same, but at least as serious as those laid to the charge of our age; and if we were suddenly transported to any other epoch of the past, it matters not to which, I do not hesitate to affirm that we would not willingly accept that epoch in exchange for our own, nor should we even very much like to contemplate the spectacle. Severity is well, but justice is due to different periods and different conditions of society. In the last hundred years we have gained more, both in morality and in common sense, than we have ever forgotten.

And here I am met by a question respecting which I will explain my view unreservedly and at once. Society in France has reached its

actual condition only by a progressive effort, an advance more or less perceptible, more or less rapid, but not without numerous interruptions and vicissitudes; it has sought to escape in turn from the feudal system, from the pretensions and the selfish contests of the great nobles, from the predominance of the Court, from arbitrariness, from the improvidence and caprices of absolute power. National unity, civil equality, and political liberty have been, throughout the whole course of our history, the objects of our aim and desire. Our greatest thinkers, the actors on the stage of our Politics, the nation itself, with its tendency dimly marked, yet powerful, have constantly proceeded in this direction and towards this object. The Revolution of 1789 was the most violent and most serious explosion of this incessant travail of France. Was it pregnant with fruitful consequences, or is the issue to be now deplored? France believed that she had then gained a great victory, not only for herself, but for all mankind. Did she deceive herself? Have we been for

so many centuries proceeding in a good road or in a bad road, towards success or towards delusion? Are we progressing, or are we declining? It is a question upon which eminent men, and men whose opinions are entitled to every respect, are, at the present day, not all of the same opinion; for whereas some persist in a cry of triumph, others give but utterance to gloomy and alarming prognostics.

I have some right to say that no one is more struck, more shocked than I am by the crimes, faults, errors, and follies both of opinion and action generated by this French Revolution; I never hesitated openly to characterise them as, in my opinion, they deserved; indeed the severe contests through which I have had to pass in my public career may, perhaps, in some degree have originated in my sincerity upon this subject. I had to confront many prejudices, and to wound much self-love. I regret no sentiment which I felt, and I retract no language which I used. But in spite of the strong

anti-revolutionary opinions which have been attributed to me, I was and still am convinced that, upon the whole, whatever the evil which that Revolution occasioned, and is occasioning, it nevertheless, served the good cause both of the nation and of Humanity; I believe that France and the world will gain by it more than they suffered, or are suffering, and that we are, in the midst of all our trials, still in an æra of progress, and not at the commencement of a decline. I derive motives for my Optimism upon this subject in the sphere of ideas as well as in that of facts. Theoretically the principles of 1789 contain a large share of truth, truth pregnant of consequence, truth superior to the share of error which they contain, and which is, nevertheless, large. Historically the tendency and the travail of opinion which have been for centuries a source to France of incontestable progress in the way of justice, liberty, and social happiness, cannot have become, all of a sudden, a cause of decline. Practically, in spite of all its ills and all its

shortcomings, the present century has no cause to dread a comparison with past centuries. There never has been any epoch in the history of French society in which it would have bettered its condition by halting, or to which it should wish to return.

I revert to my question; what perils, what obstacles, do our social institutions and our manners oppose to the establishment of Liberty with effect and upon a lasting footing? Is Christianity of a nature to stand us in good stead, or to hurt us in such a work?

All earnest men, all clear-sighted men, at the present day, whether they are Conservatives or Liberals, Christians or Free-thinkers, Catholics or Protestants, are unanimous in deploring the preponderance of material interests, the thirst for physical and vulgar pleasures, and the habits of selfishness and effeminacy which they generate.

They are right; we have indeed here an evil greater, when we consider what is the mission of our epoch, than perhaps even those believe it to

be who deplore it. The Emperor Napoleon said, in a phrase marked by all the clear and forcible colouring of his habitual language :—"I do not fear conspirators who rise at ten o'clock in the morning, and who cannot do without a fresh shirt." * There is no question of conspirators here, and for the soul to be vigorous it is not essential that the care of the person should be neglected. What concerns those who would be free, whether individuals or nations, is that they should not have their attention essentially absorbed by considerations affecting merely their material prosperity, or their petty personal comforts; they have especially to guard themselves against selfishness and Epicureanism. Whether his tastes be refined or gross, the Epicurean does not readily resign himself to make either effort or sacrifice; but he is not difficult to content if he is permitted to enjoy his pleasures

* "Je ne crains pas les conspirateurs qui se lèvent à dix heures du matin, et qui ont besoin de mettre une chemise blanche."

and his repose. Selfishness, even where it is sober and gentle, is a cold and sterile passion, it owes its empire to its success in enervating and lowering a man's nature. Liberty calls for a character of more strength, higher aspirations, greater power of resistance; a state of soul offering freer action to moral sympathy and disinterested motives. It is precisely here that Christianity can supply modern society with that of which it stands in need. Christianity teaches all men, the great and the small, the rich and the poor, not to devote all their lives to material things; she summons them to more elevated regions, and whilst she inspires them with a purer ambition, she opens to them a fairer hope even of happiness. The Christian, whether his station be powerful or humble, and his aspirations ambitious or modest, can never find an exclusive object of attention, or an exclusive motive to action, even in that principle of interest which politicians, using the word in its best sense, vainly imagine to be a panacea. Man, whether towards his fellow-creatures, or on

his own account, has another object to pursue, other laws to accomplish, other sentiments to display and to satisfy: he can neither be an Epicurean nor an Egotist.

This is the first and the greatest of the services which Christianity can and does render in our days to every society which aspires to Liberty. I proceed to mention a second service.

There is no liberty without a large measure of license. They are dreamers who hope to enjoy the benefits of the one without incurring the risk, and undergoing the inconveniences, of the other. They, too, are dreamers who believe that license will ever be effectually repressed by penalties, courts of justice, or measures of Police. Two things are certain; the one is, that it is idle to attempt to repress license completely in a free country; the other, that the moral and preventive forces of society itself are alone to be relied upon, both by governments and nations, to enable them to support that license which they cannot suppress. Christianity is the most

efficacious, the most popular, and the most approved of these forces. It is efficacious against license for two reasons and in two ways. In principle, Christianity maintains to Authority its right and its rank intact; without humbling it before Liberty, Christianity yet recognises the rights of Liberty, and demands that these should be admitted; in fact Christianity inspires men with a sentiment, with which authority cannot dispense, respect. The absence of respect is the most

respect order both in law and in morals, men whom licentious and insulting conduct shock as much as they terrify, and who, equally free, appeal in their own favour to the maxims and the arms of Liberty. History supplies us on this subject with conclusive examples. The nations of Christendom are the only nations to which license has not brought as a final consequence anarchy and despotism,—the only nations which, although they have on different occasions and by salutary reactions experienced the excesses both of power and of liberty, have not succumbed under them morally and politically. Neither the states of Pagan Antiquity nor those of the East, whether Bouddhist or Mussulman, have stood such trials; these have had their days of healthy vigour and even of glory; but when the evils which license or tyranny generated have once come upon them, they have fallen irretrievably, and all their subsequent history has merely been that of a decline more or less rapid, more or less stormy, more or less apathetic.

It is the honour of the Christian Religion that it has within it that which can cure states of their maladies, as well as individuals of their errors; and that, by the belief which it generates, and the sentiments which it inspires, it has already more than once furnished, sometimes to the friends of Order, and sometimes to the friends of Liberty, a refuge in their reverses, as well as strength to recover lost ground.

It would be as imprudent as ungrateful in these days for the friends of Liberty to ignore this grand fact and its salutary admonishment. They are called to a work much more difficult than any that they have hitherto had to accomplish: their task is no longer merely to search after guarantees for Liberty against the encroachments of pre-existent Power, or the accidental and transient ebullition of License. They have to reconcile the normal and constitutional dominion of Democracy with Liberty, and with the regular action and permanence of Liberty. Until modern times, political liberty, wherever it has existed,

has been the result of the simultaneous presence and of the conflict of different forces of society, no one of them strong enough to rule alone, but each too weak to resist efficaciously the attack of the others; at one time the Crown, at another the Aristocracy, at another the Church, each previously powerful and independent, have lived side by side with Democracy when Democracy has had limits and restrictions imposed upon its power and success; but at the present day, there are amongst us no distinct surviving influences which are powerful enough to play a similar part in society and in the government. The Crown, the Aristocracy, and the Church are no longer anything but frail wrecks of the past, or instruments created by the Democracy, and indebted to it for a borrowed force. Is this to be henceforth the permanent condition of human society, or is it only a phase, more or less transitory, of a series of ages and of revolutions, which fresh ages and fresh revolutions will hereafter profoundly modify? Futurity must decide. In

any case, it is only under the exclusive dominion of a single force, Democracy, that in these days free institutions can be founded.

That every dominant force when single is tempted to commit abuses and to become tyrannical, is a truth so much in accordance with the lessons of experience and with the conclusions of reason, that no pains need be taken to insist upon it. Not to speak of the dangerous acclivity upon which Democracy, in common with all other forces, is placed, it has peculiar characteristics which are not of a nature to set the friends of Liberty at their ease. Democracy derives its origin and power from the right of every human will, and from the majority of human wills. Truth and error press so very closely upon each other in this system, that Liberty is placed in a position of great peril. Man's volition is entitled to every respect; but it is not all its law to itself, nor is it in itself essentially a law at all: it is bound to another law, which does not emanate from itself, and which comes to it from a higher

source than man, and which it is as unable to abrogate as it was to create. The law paramount is the moral law,—the law laid down by God, to which all wills of men, whatever their number, are bound to submit. Democracy, essentially busied with the wills of men, is always inclined to attribute to them the character and the rights of divine law. Man occupies so much space in this form of government, and has so elevated a position there, that he easily forgets God—easily takes himself for God. The result is a sort of political polytheism, which, unless it appeals to a gross, material arbitrament, and to the majority of human wills, is incapable of arriving at that unity of law and of action, with which no society or government can dispense. I do not say that the individual man, and that numbers of men, are the only principles, but I do say, that they are principles characteristic of Democracy; it is against the absolute dominion of these two principles that Democracy has, in the interest of its own honour and of its own safety, to be incessantly ad-

monished and defended. A royal sage enjoined that he should be saluted every morning with the words, "Remember thou art man." This sublime and prudent admonition is no less needful for Democracy than for Royalty, and it is precisely the salutary service which is rendered to it by Christianity. In Christianity there is a light, a voice, a law, a history, which does not come from man, but which, without offending his dignity, sets him in his proper place. No belief, no institution, exalts man's dignity so highly, and at the same time so effectually represses his arrogance. The more democratic a society is, the more it is important that this double effect shall take place within it. Christianity alone has this virtue.

I am aware of the capital objection made to its empire. "The Physic without the Physicians," exclaimed Rousseau, in a sally against medical men, but the expression shows nevertheless how little he was disposed to forget that it is possible for medicine to be good and salutary. How often

have I heard men of intelligence and men in all other respects very worthy of consideration, exclaim, "Let me have Religion without the priests: I am a Christian, but no friend of the clergy." I am far from seeking to leave this difficulty unnoticed, or to elude it. It is a difficulty of the gravest nature, not in essence, but in the actual circumstances and state of opinions at the present day.

As a Protestant it does not concern me. The clergy is not amongst Protestants the object of any such uneasiness. One of the best results, in my opinion, of the Reformation of the 16th century, whether regarded as Lutheran or Calvinistic, as Anglican, or as the work of other Dissidents in religion, is that it strongly cemented the union between the ecclesiastics and the general religious community—between the spiritual and the lay members of the Church. The Reformation produced this effect, first, by authorising the clergy to marry and to enter into the relations which a life of family brings with it; and, secondly, by

giving to the laity a share in the government of the Church. The partition was not always judicious or equitable. At one time the clergy, at another the laity, have been transported from their natural places, and injured in their legitimate rights; but the relations between the two classes ceased to present the appearance of either absolutism on the one hand, or of entire subordination on the other; the laity obtained a voice and influence in the affairs of the flock; the priests, although remaining religious pastors and religious magistrates, ceased to be spiritual masters. This organisation has led to the two social institutions combining themselves in a variety of ways. At one time the civil power has invaded the government of the religious society, and deprived the clergy, not merely of empire, but of independence; at another time the two forms of society, the State and the Church, have regulated by treaty the terms of their mutual relations; whereas, in the United States of America, the two forms of society have been entirely

separated, and have mutually recovered their independence; elsewhere, as amongst the Quakers and the Moravians, all ecclesiastical authority and orders of priesthood have been abolished, and laymen have lived in the isolation each of his individual conscience, obedient only to its spontaneous impulses. But amidst all this diversity, it is the fundamental characteristic of the churches and of the sects which issued from the Reform of the 16th century, that priests do not in themselves constitute the necessary and sovereign mediators between God and man's soul, nor the sole rulers of religious society. It is particularly by virtue of this principle that the distinction between civil life and religious life has become an efficacious and a consecrated doctrine, and that Liberty has resumed its right and become an active influence in religious society itself.

But amongst Roman Catholic nations, priests are the objects of a persistent distrust which has been the fruitful source of much calamity to Christianity. History forbids surprise. The

Roman Catholic clergy has often presented the spectacle of ambition and passion, of mundane and selfish interests, strangely intermixed with faith and with earnest zeal for the furtherance of their religious mission. Serious ills and grave abuses have resulted therefrom in the relation of Church to State, and of priests to their flocks, and even in the bosom of the Church itself. These are facts almost as undisputed as they are indisputable; in proof of them the testimony, not only of its adversaries, but of the holiest members of the Church of Rome itself, may be invoked. Nothing is more natural, and indeed more inevitable, than that this should have led and should still lead, not only to ill-will towards priests, but to their being regarded as proper subjects for attack. It is not, however, on that account less certain that such an attack is, in our days, and as society is at present constituted, unjust, silly, and inopportune, as injurious to State as to Church, to Liberty as to Religion. There may be injustice and ingratitude to institutions as well as to individuals. From the fall of the Roman

Empire, and during the rudest and most sombre ages of modern history, the Catholic clergy, whether as Popes, Bishops, monastic orders, or simple priests, in the midst of their selfish pretensions and ambitious usurpations, displayed and expended treasures of intellect, courage, and perseverance in order to affirm and protect the immaterial and moral interests of humanity. They did not on all occasions accept their mission to its full extent; they did not maintain the Christian Religion in all its breadth, and in all its evangelical disinterestedness; they had their share in the acts of violence, iniquity, and tyranny of the different masters of society for the time being; they often made Liberty pay dearly for the services which they rendered to civilization; but when Liberty has become one of the conquests of that very civilization, the proof as well as the guarantee for its further progress, there is injustice and ingratitude in forgetting what part the Roman Catholic clergy effected towards the constitution of that society, the ultimate result of which has been so glorious.

The injustice is the greater that it is now inopportune and useless. From the acrimony, the anger, and alarm which characterise the attacks directed at Roman Catholicism and its Priests, we might suppose that the Inquisition was at our gates, that Rome was making a perilous onslaught upon our civil and religious liberties, and that we need to deploy all our force and all our passions to repulse the domination of the Court of Rome and of its army. Was there ever so strange a perversion of facts? For a century past, on which side has been the movement and the aggression? Is it not evidently the spirit of religious and political liberty which has now the initiative, the impulsive, onward movement? The defensive is the natural and enforced situation of the Roman Catholic Church; Romanism is much more menaced, much more attacked by public opinion in these days than our liberties are menaced or attacked by her. The supreme power in the Church of Rome, the Papacy, does indeed maintain, in principle, certain maxims and certain tra-

ditions irreconcileable with the actual state of opinion and society; it continues to condemn authoritatively some of the essential principles of modern civilization. In all earnestness, yet with every feeling of respect, I shall here make at once use of my right, both as a Protestant and as the citizen of a free country, to declare my profound conviction that this systematic persistence, however conscientious and dignified it may be, shows a great want of religious foresight as well as of political prudence. I think that Romanism, without abdication and without renouncing anything that is vitally essential to itself, might assume a position in harmony with the moral and social state in these days, and with the conditions also vitally essential to the existence of such state. I may add, that so long as the government of the Romish Church shall not have accepted and accomplished this work of conciliation—conciliation real and profound—the friends of Liberty will be justified in keeping themselves on the alert, and in maintaining a reserve towards it, as representing,

themselves, those moral and liberal principles which it disavows. But let them not attribute to this disavowal a greater importance than it deserves; let them watch the ecclesiastical power which utters it, without alarm; it has in it nothing very menacing, nothing that opposes any effectual barrier to the march of events; Liberalism is not the less victorious in these days, and not the less advancing. Many faults have been committed, and many probably will continue to be committed; as has already been the case, we shall have perhaps many a barrier opposed in our path, many a reactionary movement to endure, but the general onward impulse will nevertheless be the same, and the final result, the conquest of Liberty, religious, civil and political, not the less a certainty.

This is no mere philosophical aspiration. It is already history. There have been many vicissitudes in France, and many a crisis of different kinds during the last hundred years in the struggle between Liberalism and Roman Catholicism; the former has often committed errors, made mistakes,

by which Romanism has adroitly profited; but at every reverse Romanism has recognised her own defeat, and accepted some part of its consequences. The Constituent Assembly by the civil organisation of the clergy, the National Convention by its proscriptions, had endeavoured, the one to enslave, the other to abolish the Catholic Church; the great master of the revolution, Napoleon, raised it up again by the Concordat of 1802; but the Concordat at the same time consecrated many of the fundamental principles of the liberal régime, and the Catholic Church of Rome consecrated Napoleon and signed the Concordat, even whilst protesting against some of its consequences. At the Restoration some wished to discuss again the question of the Concordat, and to re-establish the relation between Church and State upon their ancient foundations; but the attempt encountered, in the ranks of the Royalists themselves, a decisive resistance, and totally failed. Under the Government of 1830, Roman Catholicism regained its ground and resumed fresh vigour

by both using the name of Liberty and claiming its right. When the Republic again appeared in 1848, Roman Catholicism treated it with as much tenderness as it experienced itself from the Republic. I pause before the actual relations of the Church of Rome to the new Empire; Rome has païd a dear price for all that she has received from the Empire; but even here she showed, and appears disposed still to show, a large measure of patience and resignation. She is right.

One fact particularly arrests my attention in the course of this stormy history. In the midst of her reverses and her concessions, Roman Catholicism has displayed rare and energetic virtues of fidelity and independence. She has opposed to the bloody persecution of Terrorism, the inexhaustible blood of her martyrs, bishops, priests, monks, men and women; that Clergy of France, once so vacillating in faith and so mundane in morals, bore their cross with an indomitable sentiment of Christian honour. The despotism of the Emperor Napoleon encountered in the person of

Pope Pius VII., in some Cardinals, and some Bishops, a passive but firm resistance, which neither the power of the Despot, nor the contagious servility of their contemporaries, could surmount. And again, in these days, who can fail to perceive with what activity and devotedness, with what sacrifices and efficacity, Roman Catholicism, by the mere force of its native energy, upholds the cause of its chief and of itself? If civil society had defended its liberties and its dignities as the Church of Rome defends hers, Liberalism in France would be farther advanced on its road and towards its object.

But let not Romanists deceive themselves: one cannot make use of Liberty without being forced to enter into an engagement and compromise with Liberty; one cannot appeal to Liberty without doing homage to her; she lays her hand upon those to whom she lends her aid. The great fact which I before invoked, the work of reconciliation between modern society and Roman Catholicism, is more advanced than those believe who still

stand aloof from it and oppose it. This is proved by two facts. In the very bosom of Roman Catholicism, and from amongst its most zealous defenders, that group of liberal Catholics was formed which has played and which continues to play so active a part in struggling for the Liberties of their church, and for the rights of their chief: these are at once the ornaments of their church, and its intellectual sword; and the publication which supports their views, the "Correspondant," is, next to the "Revue des deux Mondes," the periodical which meets with most success and has the greatest circulation. Passing from this brilliant group to the more modest ranks of the Roman Catholic clergy, I ask what is the disposition, the attitude, the conduct of those faithful and humble priests who exercise the Christian ministry in our provinces and in the inferior quarters of our cities; they have not always all the science, all the mental culture, which one might desire; but whilst adhering to Catholic faith and giving the example of Christian lives, they live in the midst of the people;

they know it, they understand it; they are aware what the conditions are which permit them to live with and to exercise an influence upon the people; they enter by degrees into its sentiments and its instincts; without premeditation, almost without perceiving it, they become each day more and more men of their time and country, more familiar with the ideas and liberal tendencies of modern society. Thus at the two poles of Roman Catholicism, in its most elevated ranks and in its popular militia, the same result is obtained, in the one case by men of enlightened views and of superior ability, and in the other case by men of good sense and honesty of purpose; and thus in the Roman Church those moral and political principles of 1789 make their way, which form the basis of the new social edifice, of its laws, and of its liberties.

I do not dispute, neither do I attack; I record facts as I observe and appreciate them. And in my opinion, with reference to French institutions,—for I speak only of France,—the essential consequences from these facts, as far as they bear

upon the relations of Christianity to Liberty, are as follows.

I have here not a word to say respecting the Protestant Church in France; the questions which have agitated her for some time past are questions of faith and internal discipline, entirely aloof from any incertitude or differences of opinion as to the rights of conscience or of religious society in their relations to civil society. Protestantism in France, whether orthodox or not, adopts and upholds the largest maxims as to religious liberty, and as to the guarantee for it, in the separation of religious life from civil life. The most zealous Liberals have nothing more in this respect to demand from even the most orthodox Protestants; these are indeed of their church the most urgent in claiming for religious society the right to have its internal autonomy, and to stand independently of the state. It is, on the contrary, Roman Catholics, and the advocates of the essential principles of modern society, who most dispute about the general question of liberty.

The more I reflect, the more I am convinced that henceforth this question can only be seriously and efficaciously dealt with in one of two ways: the one is by the alliance of Church and State, on conditions which, whilst distinguishing civil life from religious life, shall guarantee to individuals religious liberty in civil society, and to the church itself its internal autonomy in matters of faith and of religious discipline. The other solution is the complete separation of Church and State, and their mutual independence.

That the Church prefers the system of an Alliance with the State to that of the Church's Liberty and isolation from the State, I well understand.

She is right. Alliance with the State is to her a sign of strength, a means of influence, a pledge for her dignity and her stability. The complete separation of the two societies leaves religious institutions, and particularly their clergy, in a fluctuating and precarious situation: a system essentially democratic, it rather places the eccle-

siastical magistracy under the opinions and wills of its lay members, than these under the influence of the religious authorities. This system is especially alien to the origin, the fundamental principle, and the Hierarchy, of the Roman Catholic Church; it is impossible for this Church to accept it unless urgently demanded by the interests of moral authority, independence, and liberty. But let not the Roman Catholic Church misapprehend; an alliance of Church with State has also conditions without which a Church would vainly expect any advantage; for the alliance to be serious and effectual, there must be between Church and State a large measure of harmony as to the essential principles of the religious society and of the civil society which the Church and the State respectively represent: if the two societies and those who govern them, do not mutually admit their respective principles, if they disavow each other incessantly, and carry on in the bosom of their alliance, a war, open or secret, all the good effect of such alliance disappears, and the alliance itself

is soon compromised. The treaties concluded at different epochs, under the name of Concordats, between Chambers and States in different countries of Christendom, have only been possible and efficacious, because there was a great basis of harmony in the fundamental institutions of the two contracting parties; they differed upon some points; they had reciprocally to make concessions and grant guarantees; but taken altogether they approved of each other and were sincere in supporting each other; peace was the point from which their alliance started, and the dissentiments which existed on each side had no reference to any vital questions. It suffices for us to cast a glance at the history of Catholicism in France, of the Anglican Church in England, of the Lutheran Church in Germany and in Sweden, to acknowledge this truth; and what is occurring and forming matter of negotiation in our days in Italy and in Austria, upon the subject of the relations of the Church with the State, furnishes a further striking confirmation. In an age of

liberty, of publicity, and of continual discussion, when it is possible for anything to be thought or said, and for any opinion to be maintained or attacked, it is more than ever indispensable that any treaty between Church and State should be serious and sincere; that is to say, that the two contracting parties should recognise and accept in each other, without equivocation and without subterfuge, the character which each really possesses. This is the only condition upon which an alliance can be real, becoming, and advantageous. In presence of the undisguised movements and the ever recurring and daring ventures of Liberty, a policy of reticence and procrastination, obscure and dim reservations, inconsistent expedients, and secret warfare, is no longer practicable; such policy, far from lending any help, discredits and weakens the power which places its trust in it. As for me, I believe that the Catholic Church, if not without endangering her habits, at least without endangering her essential principles, has it in her power to set herself at peace with the

fundamental principles of modern society and of actual civil governments; but should she either not wish or not know how to march towards this object and to obtain it, let her not give way to any illusion; alliance with the State would be rather a source of weakness and of peril to her than an advantage, and she would only eventually be driven to seek a refuge in the system of separation and complete independence.

As for the State, the system which separates the two societies would free it from many a burthen and much embarrassment; but it would cause her other embarrassments, and lead to the loss of many advantages. It is convenient to discourse of the principle of a "Free church in a free country," but after the long alliance which has existed between them, it is easier to proclaim such principle than to apply it: not only is it impossible to divorce Church from State without violently wrenching asunder previous bonds, but more lasting consequences ensue; once disengaged from every connection with the civil

power, ministers of religion busy themselves no longer about the interests of civil society; their thoughts are exclusively absorbed by questions of religion and its affairs. Governments have long been accustomed to derive, and derive at the present day, a moral influence of great value from an alliance with the Church: but this influence supposes one condition which is not only especially important in our days, but of capital importance: in the actual state of opinion and of manners, no good results can be politically looked for from the alliance, if the civil power do not abstain from all interference in questions purely religious; the complete independence of the church and of its chiefs, in matters of faith and of religious discipline, is the only condition which can justify their giving their indirect support to the state government, and which can purge their support of all impure motives. The alliance of the two powers could formerly, in a certain degree, co-exist with no inconsiderable confusion in their respective attributes, and a

somewhat earnest claim on the part of each to domineer over the other; nothing similar can occur at the present day; neither Church nor State can any longer be the master or the servant of the other. Let neither princes nor priests deceive themselves; their reciprocal independence, and their uncontested empire, each in its own province, can alone give to their alliance the dignity which the alliance requires, if it is to be real, efficacious, and lasting.

Every road leads me to the same point; to every question the facts give me the same answer. Liberty has need of Christianity, Christianity has need of Liberty. As modern society demands to be free, the religion of Christ is its most necessary ally. Christianity and civil society have mutually, I admit it, a grave feeling of disquietude and distrust; but this disquietude and distrust are not natural and inevitable results of principles essential to civil society and religious society, of any compulsory relations existing between them; they spring from the faults which

the two institutions have committed towards each other, and from the contest which each has forced upon the other. Liberty alone can effectually combat such sentiments which have become habitual and traditional. To dissipate them entirely, something besides Liberty is requisite; but without Liberty neither religious society nor civil society will obtain their legitimate objects, these objects being peace in their relations to each other, and the moral progress of man, and of the State, whether allied with or independent of the Church.

SECOND MEDITATION.

CHRISTIANITY AND MORALITY.

Two attempts are now being simultaneously made, of different characters, although of the same origin and tendency. Seriously minded men, who persist in believing and calling themselves Christians, are labouring to separate Christian morals from Christian dogmas, and although they make Jesus their moral idea of humanity, are stripping him of his miracles and divinity. Others, who declare openly that they are no Christians, endeavour to separate morality in the abstract from religion in the abstract, and place the source of morality, as well as its authority, in human nature, and in it alone. On the one side we find a Christian morality independent of Christian faith; on the other a Morality independent

of all religious belief, either natural or revealed: these two doctrines are in our days proclaimed and propagated with ardour.

I frankly admit that their defenders are sincere in adopting and upholding them, and that they do so in the name of truth alone. In philosophy, as in politics, I believe error and honest intentions to be more general than falsehood and evil design. Moreover, who would discuss convictions, unless himself convinced that they are serious and earnest? Opinions founded on interested or hypocritical motives are not worth the honour of a discussion; they merit only to be attacked and unmasked. In the name of truth alone I combat the two doctrines to which I have alluded, and which some now strive to accredit.

The true cause of this twofold attempt is the incredulity and the scepticism which prevail with regard to religion. Non-Christians are numerous; few Deists are quite sure of their belief and of its efficacy. A necessity for morality is felt to exist; its right to regulate the actions

of man is acknowledged; it is in order to preserve to it its integrity and its force that efforts are made to separate it from religion, from all religious creeds, all of which, it is here assumed, are either ruined or tottering. Thus, Independent Morality is, as it were, a raft, offered to the human soul, and to human society, to save their time-worn vessel from being wrecked.

The idea is false, the attempt of evil consequence. They who flatter themselves that they can leave Christian morality standing, after wrenching it from Christian dogmas,—and they who believe it possible to preserve morality, after detaching it from religion,—err alike, for they fail to recognise the essential facts of human nature and of human society.

Both doctrines are derived from an inexact and incomplete observation of these facts. I have already stated in these Meditations what I think of the isolation of Christian morality from Christianity, and the reason why I reject it. At present I apply myself to the idea of

independent morality, and in the name of a psychology, pure at once and severe, I affirm that there exists an intimate, legitimate, and necessary union between morality and religion.

A preliminary observation occurs to me. Those who adopt the theory of an independent morality, start from the idea that there is a moral law, strange to and superior to all interested motives, to all selfish passions; these rank duty above, and treat it as independent of, every other motive of action.

I am far from contesting this principle with them, but they forget that it *has* been, and still *is*, strongly contested: contested by both ancient and modern philosophers. Some have considered the pursuit of happiness, and the satisfaction of individual interests, as the right and legitimate aims of human life. Others have placed the rule of man's conduct, not in personal interests, but in general utility, in the common welfare of all mankind. Others have thought that they could perceive the origin and the guarantee for morals

in the sympathy of human sentiments. The moral and obligatory law, or duty, is far from being the recognised and generally accepted basis of morality; systems the most varied have arisen, and are incessantly forming themselves, with respect to the principles of morals, as with respect to other great questions of our nature; and the human understanding fluctuates no less in this corner of the philosophic arena than in the others. Let the moralists of the new school not deceive themselves; in proclaiming morality to be independent of religion, they mean to give it one fixed basis, the same for all, and they believe that they succeed in the attempt. They deceive themselves: morality, thus isolated, remains as much as ever a prey to the disputes of man.

I pass over this grave misconception on the part of the defenders of the system, and I examine the system itself. Let us see if it is the faithful and full expression of human morality, if it contains all the facts which constitute its natural and essential elements.

These facts I sum up as follows; the distinction between moral good and evil; the obligation of doing good and avoiding evil; the faculty of accomplishing or not this obligation. In brief and philosophic terms the Moral Law, Duty, and Liberty. These are the natural, primitive, and universal facts which constitute human morality; it is by reason and by virtue of these facts that man is a moral being.

I have not here to enter into a discussion of these same facts; I do not occupy myself at this moment with systems which disregard or deny them, in whole or in part; all the three facts, or any one of the three. The partisans of the system of independent morality admit them all, as I do; the question between them and myself is this, whether or not, whilst rendering homage to the true principle of morality, they fully comprehend its signification, and accept its results.

It is the characteristic and the honour of man that he is not satisfied with merely gathering facts which relate either to himself or to the

external world, but that he seeks to know their origin and object, their import and bearing.

In morals, as in physics, statistics are only the point from which science sets out; it is only after having well observed facts, and having verified them, that we have to discuss the questions which they raise, and the further ultimate facts which the facts already ascertained contain and reveal. The fact of human morality, such as I have just described it in its three constituent elements, the Moral Law, Duty, and Liberty, cannot fail to suggest these two questions: Whence proceeds the moral law, and whence is its authority? What is the sense, and what the ultimate result to the moral being himself, of the fulfilment or violation of his duty; that is to say, of the use which he makes of his liberty? No philosophical system can either suppress or elude these questions; they present themselves to the mind of man as soon as he directs his attention to the moral character of man's nature. I propose to consider in succession the three constituent elements of this great

truth, so as to determine rightly its source and bearing.

Moral law has neither been invented by man, nor does it spring from any human convention; man, by acknowledging it, admits that he has not created it, that he cannot abolish or change it. Political and civil laws are diverse and ever varying; they depend in a great measure upon time, place, social circumstances, or human will; when men adopt or reject them, they do so with the feeling that they are the masters of them, to deal with them accordingly as their interests or their fancies suggest.

But when a law presents itself to them in the form of a moral law, they feel that this is not dependent on them, that it takes its source and derives its authority elsewhere than from their own opinion or volition. They may mistake in rendering or in refusing homage to a particular precept of conduct; they may attach to laws a moral value which they do not intrinsically possess, or pass unnoticed the really moral character

of another law, and the obligations which it imposes upon them; but wherever they believe that they perceive the character of a moral law, they bow before it as before something which does not emanate from them, and before a power of a different nature from man's.

The moral law no more belongs to the general mechanism of the world, than to the invention of man; it has none of the characteristics that mark the laws of physical order; none of the results which follow from them; it is by no means inherent in the forms or combinations of matter; it does not govern the relations or movements of bodies; obligatory, and fixed as fate, it addresses itself solely to that intelligent and free being, of whom Pascal said, in his grand language, "If the universe were to crush him, still man would be more noble than that which destroyed him, because he knows that he dies; and of the advantage that the universe has over him, the universe knows nothing." Man does much more than know that he dies; it happens, sometimes, that

he encounters death voluntarily—that he chooses to die in obedience to the moral law. It is the law of Liberty.

What mean these words, Law of Liberty? How does this law, called Duty, come to establish itself in the human mind, and command man's Liberty to respect it?

Some essay to found Duty upon Right, and to derive its authority solely from the independence and dignity of humanity. Man, it is said, feels and knows that he is a free agent; as such it is his right that no human being shall attack his independence or his dignity. He finds in every other human being the same nature, and therefore the same right as he possesses himself. Thus mutual right is derived from individual right, and "Duty is nothing but the right which it is recognised that another possesses."*

There is here a profound mistake, and a strange forgetfulness.

* La Morale Independante, a weekly journal, No. 1, 6th August, 1865.

Why, when a man finds himself in relation with his fellow-men, does he attribute to them the same right which he recognises himself as possessing, and which he calls upon them to see and admit there? If this is a prudent calculation, the wisdom which arises from a correct appreciation of his interest, let us have done with it, it is not morality. If, prudence and interest apart, man regards himself as bound to pay, to the independence and personal dignity of his fellow-men, the same respect, and to attribute to them the same right, as he lays claim to for himself; if reciprocity becomes in this manner the fundamental principle of morality, what becomes of the obligation where there is no reciprocity? Will man be bound to respect in others the right which will not be respected in himself? If he is bound to it in all cases, and in spite of everything, then Duty has another source than the mutual respect of persons. If he is, on the other hand, not bound to it in all cases, what becomes of the paramount and absolute character of Duty; in

other words, of the moral law? It is no longer anything but law upon condition.

Not merely the religion of Christ, but all the great doctrines of the world, religious or philosophical, peremptorily refuse to attach this conditional character of reciprocity to the moral law; all maintain that duty is in every case absolute and imperative, independently of the conduct of others. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same." "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."* "Be ye," say the laws of Menou to the Hindoos, "as the wood of the sandal tree, that perfumes the hatchet which wounds it." If we interrogate Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Kant; in whatever other

* Luke vi. 32, 33, 35.

respect they may disagree, they think upon this fundamental point with the Gospel and the Laws of Menou.

It is in the confusion of Duty and of Right, and in the inversion of their natural and their true order, that the error resides of those who maintain the Theory of an Independent Morality. Duty is the moral law of men's actions; law intimate, personal. Right, on the other hand, is derived from the application of the moral law to the relations of men. I will not deny myself the great yet melancholy pleasure of citing upon this subject a few words of a person whose mind and life were united to mine, and who, in a modest essay, threw over this important subject a flood of light as vivid as it is pure: "The word Right, brings with it the idea of a relation to something. As every Right is an application of a moral law to the different relations of Society, there exists not a Right of which Society is not the occasion. A Right is only the moral power of an individual over the Liberty

of another: a power attributed to him by virtue of the moral law which regulates the relations of men with one another. Duty is the sole basis of Right. Did there exist no duties there would exist no rights. There is no claim of a right which does not affirm a Duty to be its source. Duty applied as a rule to govern the relations of man to man constitutes justice; justice cannot exist without Duty; a thing is neither just, nor unjust, as far as regards the being who has not had the duty prescribed to him of distinguishing between them. Ideas of Right are as essential to men as ideas of duty; for if the idea of Duty is the social bond;—the means of peace and of Union amongst mankind;—the idea of Right constitutes the arms, offensive and defensive, which society gives to men, for reciprocal use. Every man has a consciousness of his own rights, which aids him to keep others in the line of their duty; but rights only so far aid him to do this, as the duty upon which they are founded is known and respected; for with regard to that

man who ignores his duty, the man who has a right has absolutely nothing. Right is a moral power producing its effects without the help of physical force; if he who has both right and power must employ the power to enforce his right, it is no longer his right which triumphs, it is his power; his right remains to him to justify the employment of force; but it is not his right which has made his cause triumph. Thus it is that the idea of Duty is the basis of society, and is at the same time the basis of the idea of right, an idea which in its turn contributes also to the stability of society. To found society upon the sole idea of duty, is to deprive society of one of its most powerful means of defence and of development; to strip the tree of the buds which serve to give it at once strength and amplitude. To found society upon the idea of Right without the idea of duty, is to cut away the very roots of the tree." *

* "Essai sur les idées de droit et de devoir considérées comme fondement de la société." It is inserted in the work entitled, "Conseils de Morale, ou Essais sur l'homme, les mœurs, les caractères, le monde, les femmes, l'education, etc.

This is not all. Besides the mistake which they commit in considering Duty as a mere consequence of Right, derived from the independence and dignity of man as man, the advocates of the theory of an independent morality forget an entire class of moral elements occupying an important position in our nature; I mean, the instinctive sentiments intimately allied to the Moral Law, sentiments to which the notion of a Right, founded upon the independence and dignity of man's personality, is completely strange. Is it on account of the independence and dignity of man's personality that fathers and mothers regard it as their duty to love their children, to take charge of them, to work for and devote themselves to them? Is it by virtue of this principle, and of the right which flows from it, that children are bound to honour their father and their mother? Man's soul, man's existence, is full of moral relations and moral acts, in which the idea of Right

Par Madame Guizot, "née de Meulan," (2 vols. 8vo, 1828) vol. ii., pp. 147—271.

has no part; no part, I mean, in the sense which these theorists of an independent morality attach to it: their system is no more an explanation of Sympathy than of Duty.

I am touching upon the source of their error. If they make the principle of human morality consist in a Right emanating from man's Liberty and man's intelligence, it is that they see in man only a free and intelligent being. Strange ignorance, and mutilation of man's nature. At the same time that he is a free and intelligent being, man is a being dependent and subject: he is dependent, in the material order, upon a power superior to his own; and subject, in the moral order, to a law which he did not make, which he cannot change, which he is forced to admit even whilst he is free not to obey it; a law from which he cannot withdraw himself without troubling his soul and endangering his future. Morality in a sense is in effect independent; it is essentially independent of man; man, the free agent man, is its subject. Morality is truly the law of Liberty of Action.

Liberty is not an isolated fact, which exhausts itself by working its own completion, and which, once accomplished, remains without further consequences. To Liberty is attached Responsibility. When the human being, giving effect to his free will, resolves and acts, he feels that he is responsible for his resolution and his act. The Laws of Society declare this to him in express terms, for they punish him if they judge his act to be criminal; not merely because they find his act to be hurtful, but because they find it to be morally culpable: for, were its author pronounced to be mad, or his mind or volition recognised as unsound, the laws of society would acquit him. And if a culprit escape legal punishment, he does not escape from the internal punishment of remorse. Without speaking of penal laws, remorse is at once the proof and the sanction of moral responsibility. Possible it is that all remorse may be lulled to sleep in the mind of the hardened offender; but there are a thousand instances to prove that it may be always re-

awakened. Neither in good nor in evil is man's nature entirely effaced. Repentance sometimes hides itself in recesses so profound, that to penetrate thither is impossible, except for the soul which feels repentance even when seeking to escape from it.

As Liberty supposes responsibility, so Responsibility supposes an idea of merit or of demerit attaching naturally to the use made of liberty. I set aside here all the questions, in my opinion, ill put and wrongly solved by Theologians, upon this subject of merit or demerit. According to the general sentiment and common sense of all mankind, there is merit for a man in the accomplishment of Moral Law, there is demerit in its violation. It is a fact recognised and proclaimed even in the simplest and most ordinary incidents of human life, as well as in the political organisation of society, and in the problems which concern the eternal future. However the recompense or the punishment may be accelerated or delayed; whatever its nature or its measure; the moral career

of a man is not complete, nor the moral order established, until the responsibility inherent in his Liberty has received its complement and arrived at its end in the just appreciation and equitable return made to him for his merits or demerits.

Thus far I have spoken of Independent Morality; I have scrupulously confined myself to studying moral facts as man's nature, and man's nature alone, presents them to us. I have considered and described them as they are in themselves, entirely apart from every other element and every other consideration. Those moral facts are briefly as follows:—

The distinction between moral good and moral evil.

The Moral Law, the duty of doing good and avoiding evil.

Moral Liberty.

Moral Responsibility.

Moral merit and demerit.

These are, I admit, facts which man recognises in himself as the proper and intimate characte-

ristics of his own nature. But these truths once recognised and determined, what is their import? Are they facts isolated in human nature, as they are in Psychology, or have they anterior causes and necessary consequences? Are they self-sufficing, or do they contain and reveal other truths which form their complement and their sanction? The human mind cannot elude this question.

I have established that the moral law is not of human invention; that it does not exist merely by man's agreement; that it is not one of those laws of fate by which the material world is governed. It is the law of the intellectual world, of the *free* world; a law superior to that world which, by recognising it as law, recognises itself at the same time both as free and subject. Who is the author of that law? Who imposes it upon man—upon man of whom it is not the work, and whom it governs without enslaving? Who placed it above this world where the present life is passed? Evidently there must be a superior

power from which the moral law emanates, and of which it is a revelation. With the good sense which his frivolity and his cynicism made him so oft forget, Voltaire said, speaking of the material world and the order reigning in it:—

"Je ne puis songer
Que cette horloge existe et n'ait point d'horloger."

I cannot think
This clock exists and never had a maker.

In the moral world we have to do with something far different from a clock; nor are we in the presence of a machine constructed, regulated, once for all; the law of Order, that is to say, the moral law, is incessantly in contact with man's free agency; man does homage to the law which he is yet at liberty to accomplish or to violate; the law is a manifestation of the supreme legislator, of whose thought and will it is the expression. God moral sovereign, and man free subject, are both contained in the fact of the moral law. In this fact alone Kant found God; he erred in not also finding God elsewhere; but it is never-

theless true that it is in the moral law, the rule of human Liberty, that God shows himself to man most directly, most clearly, most undeniably.

Just as the moral law, without a sovereign legislator to impose it upon man, is an incomplete and inexplicable fact, a river without source, just so the moral responsibility of the free agent man, without a supreme judge to apply it, is an incomplete and inexplicable fact, a source without outlet, which runs and loses itself no one can tell whither. Just as the moral law reveals the moral legislator, just so does moral Responsibility reveal the moral judge. Just as the moral law is no law of human invention, just so human judgments, rendered in the name of moral responsibility, are hardly ever the judgments perfectly true and just which such responsibility expects and calls for. God is contained in the moral law as its primal author, and in moral responsibility as its definitive judge. The moral system, that is, the empire of the moral law, is incomprehensible and impossible if there is no God there, not only

to establish it in a region above and paramount to man's free agency, but to establish it when troubled by man's conduct as a free agent.

Thus the moral truths, inherent in and proper to the human nature—that is, the distinction between moral good and moral evil, moral obligation, moral responsibility, moral merit and demerit,—are necessarily and intimately connected with the truths of Religion; for instance, with God moral legislator, God moral spectator, God moral judge. Thus morality is naturally and essentially connected with religion. Morality is, it is true, a thing special and distinct in the ensemble of man's nature and of man's life, but it is in no respect independent of the ensemble to which it belongs. It has its particular place in that ensemble, but it is only in that ensemble that its existence is reasonable, thence only that it derives its source and its authority.

Morals may, in the order of science, be separately observed and described; but in the order of actuality morality is inseparable from Religion.

What would be said of a physiologist if he maintained that the heart is independent of the brain, because those two organs are distinct, organs which are closely united and indispensable to each other in the unity of the human being?

The spectacle of the world leads us to the same result as the study of man, and reads us the same lesson. History confirms Psychology. What is the great action which makes itself most remarkable upon the stage of human societies? The constant struggle of good with evil, of just with unjust. In this struggle what shocking disorders! What iniquity perpetrated! How frequent an interregnum in the empire of the moral law and of justice, and what vicissitudes there! At one time the moral decree is expected in vain, and the human conscience remains painfully troubled by the successes of vice and of crime: at another time, contrary to all expectation, and after the most deplorable infractions of the moral law, the moral judgment comes. "In vain," said Chateaubriand fifty years ago, "does

Nero prosper; Tacitus already lives in the empire; he grows up unnoticed near the ashes of Germanicus, and already a just providence has left in the hands of an obscure child the fame of the master of the world." Chateaubriand was right; Tacitus was the avenger of the moral law outraged by the masters of the Roman Empire; he was the judge of their triumphs; but in that very Empire the most victorious of its masters, Marcus Aurelius, after having consecrated his life to the search after and the practice of the moral law, dies in profound sadness beneath his tent on the banks of the Danube; sad on account of his wife, sad on account of his son, and of the future of that world which he had governed, and which was only to be renewed, and regenerated, by those Christians whom he had persecuted. Everything is incomplete, imperfect, incoherent, obscure, contradictory, in this vast conflict of men and actions called History; and Providence, the personification of eternal wisdom and justice, sometimes manifests itself there with

éclat, and sometimes remains there, inert and veiled, beneath the most sombre mysteries. Is such the normal, definitive state of the universe? Shall truth, shall justice, never assume there more space than they now occupy? When shall light dawn upon the darkness? Who restore order to this chaos? Man evidently is insufficient to the task; in the world, as in individual man, the moral principle is still mutilated, and too infirm for its mission, unless it is intimately united to the religious principle. Morality can as little dispense with God in the life of the human race, as in that of the individual man.

In these days more than ever morality has need of God. I am far from thinking ill of my country or of my age; I believe that they progress, that they have a future; but humanity is now-a-days exposed to a rude trial. On one side we have been witnesses to events of the most contradictory character: everything in the world of opinion has been questioned; everything

in that of facts has been shaken, overthrown, raised up again, left tottering. Oppressed by this spectacle, what remains to men's minds more than feeble convictions—dim hopes? On the other side, in the midst of this universal shock of minds, science, and man's power over the surrounding world, have been prodigiously extended and confirmed; light has shone more and more brightly upon the material world, at the very moment when it was becoming paler and paler, declining more and more, in the moral world. We have plucked and are still plucking, more actively than ever, the fruit of the tree of knowledge; whereas the rules of human conduct, the laws of good and of evil, have become indistinct in our thought. Man remains divided between pride and doubt; intoxicated by his power, and disquieted by his weakness. Man's soul, how perturbed! human morality, how endangered!

Thus far I have treated the subject with far more reserve and indulgence for the opinions

of others than I intended. I have limited myself to the bounds assigned to the question by the advocates of the theory of independent morality themselves. I have done nothing more than set in broad daylight the intimate, natural, and necessary connection of morals with religion; of man, moral being, with God, moral sovereign. I am only at the threshold of the truth. It is not merely to religion in general that morality pertains; it is not merely the idea of God of which it has need; it requires the constant presence of God, his unceasing action upon the human soul. It is from Christianity alone that morality can now derive the clearness, force, and security, indispensable for the exercise of its empire. And it is not for her practical utility, it is for her truth, her intrinsic value, that I hold Christianity to be necessary to the human soul, and to human societies. It is because she is in perfect harmony with man's moral nature; and because she has been already tested in man's history; that Christianity is the faithful

expression of the moral law, and the legitimate master of the moral being.

The first and the incomparable characteristic of Christianity, is the extent, I should rather say the immensity, of her moral ambition. The moral system established by Christ has often been contrasted with the reforms aimed at by great men whose endeavour it also was to fix moral laws for man's conduct, and to secure their empire over him. Jesus has been compared to Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Cakia-mouni, Mahomet. The comparison is singularly inappropriate and superficial. The wisest, the most illustrious, of these moral reformers, even the most powerful, understood and accomplished at best but a very limited and incomplete work; sometimes they only sought to place in a clear light the rational principles of morality; sometimes they gave to their disciples, addressing themselves to these alone, rules for conduct in conformity with rational principles of morality; they taught a doctrine or established rules for disci-

pline; they founded schools or sects. The Christian work was something quite different. Jesus was not a philosopher who entered into discussions with his disciples, and instructed them in moral science; nor a chief who grouped around him a certain number of adepts, and subjected them to certain special rules which distinguish, nay sever, them from the mass of mankind: Jesus expounds no doctrine, sets up no system of discipline, and organises no particular society: he penetrates to the bottom of the human soul, of every soul; he lays bare the moral disease of humanity, and of every man; and he commands his disciples with authority to apply the cure, first to themselves, and then to all men:—"Save your soul, for what would it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?" "Go and preach to all nations."

What philosopher, what reformer, ever conceived an idea so ambitious, so vast? ever undertook to solve so completely, so universally, the moral problem of man's nature and man's destiny?

And this was no chimerical ambition; the mission of Christ has been pursued, and is still being pursued in the world, its onward movement often crossed, interrupted, altered, never hopelessly arrested. And during the first three centuries of Christianity, it was in the name and solely with the arms of Faith and of Liberty, that she commenced her enterprise of vanquishing man and the world. And in these days, after the lapse of nineteen centuries, in spite of the intermixture of error, of crime, and evil, it is with the same arms, and with them alone, that Christianity, in the name of Faith and of Liberty, and exposed to fresh and violent attacks, resumes in the moral world the same task, and promises herself fresh success.

Without attempting, indeed, to sound them to their depths, let me at least indicate the causes of this indomitable vitality of the Christian Religion, and show why the hope is well founded which she entertains in the midst of her trials.

Of the moral philosophers, almost all are either

bitter censors, cold observers, or flatterers of human nature. Some of them proclaim that man is naturally good, and that his vices are solely due to the bad institutions of society. Some, again, regard self-interest and self-esteem as the only springs of human actions. Others describe the errors and foibles of man with a careful sagacity, and yet a sagacity that does not indispose them to jeer and mock at them, as if they were actors in a drama, both amused themselves and amusing the spectators. How different the regard and the sentiment of Jesus when contemplating man: how serious that regard! how profound, how pregnant with effect that sentiment! No illusion, no indifference with respect to the nature of man; full, he knows it to be, of evil and at the same time of good; inclined to revolt against the moral law, at the same time that it is not incapable of obeying it; he sees in man the original sin, source of the troubles and of the perils of his soul: he does not regard the evil as incurable; he contemplates it with an emotion at once severe and tender, and

he attacks it with a resolution superior to every discouragement, and prepared for every sacrifice. Why should I not simply employ Christian terms, the most genuine of any, as well as the most impressive? Jesus lays bare the sin without reserve, and without reserve devotes himself to the sinner's salvation. What philosopher ever comprehended man so well, and loved him so well, even whilst judging him so freely and so austerely?

Jesus does not occupy himself less with man's futurity than with man's nature. At the same time that he lays down, in all its rigour, the principle of the moral law, the pure accomplishment of duty, he forgets not that man has need of happiness, and thirsts after happiness, after a happiness pure and lasting; he opens to virtue the prospect of its attainment, he holds out a hope, foreign to all worldly objects, hope of an ideal happiness inaccessible to the curiosity of man's mind, but apt to satisfy the aspirations of his soul, and not, as it were, a conquest to be effected by merit, nor the acquittal of a

debt, but a recompense to be accorded to the virtuous efforts of man by the equitable benevolence of God. The Christian Religion, at the same time that it compels man during this life to constant and laborious exertion, has in store for him, if only he labour in accordance to the law, "the kingdom of God" and "the promises of eternal life."

Thus, Jesus knows human nature entirely, and satisfies it; he keeps simultaneously in view man's duties and his necessities, his weaknesses and his merits. He does not allow the curtain to fall upon the rude scenes of life, and the sad spectacles of the world, without any *dénouement.* He has a prospect, and a futurity, and a satisfaction for man, superior to his trials, and superior to his disappointments. In what manner does Jesus attain this result? How does he touch all the chords of man's soul, and respond to all its appeals? By the intimate union of morality with religion, of the moral law with moral responsibility: sole view, complete at once and defini-

tive, of the nature and destiny of humanity; sole efficacious solution of the problems which weigh upon the thought and life of man!

I say the sole efficacious solution. Efficacity is, in truth, the peculiar, the essential characteristic of Christianity. However high-reaching the ambition of philosophy is, it is infinitely less so than that of religion. The ambition of philosophers is purely scientific. They study, observe, discuss; their labours produce systems, schools. The Christian Religion is a practical work, not a scientific study. At the base of its dogmas and of its precepts there is certainly a philosophy, and, in my opinion, the true philosophy; but this philosophy is only the point from which Christianity departs, not its object. The object is to induce the human soul to govern itself according to the divine law; and to attain this object it deals with man's nature as it is, in its entirety, with all its different elements, all its sublime aspirations. There, to borrow the language of strategy, we see the basis of operation of Christianity; the basis upon which it enters

upon its moral struggle, and upon which it undertakes to ensure the triumph in man of good over evil, and to procure the salvation of man by his reformation.

When I published, two years ago, the Second Series of these Meditations—the subject of which is the actual state of the Christian Religion—I essayed to characterise therein the fundamental errors of the different philosophical systems which combat it. I sent, according to my custom, the volume to my companion in life, and my *confrère* at the Institute, M. Cousin, with whom, notwithstanding our differences of opinion, I maintained always very friendly relations. On the 1st June, 1866, he wrote to me from the Sorbonne the following letter :—

"My dear Friend,

"As soon as I received your book I hastened to read it, and I tell you very sincerely that I am very content with it. The little difference between our opinions, which you have not pre-

tended to conceal, are inevitable, because they are the consequence of a general dissimilarity in the manner in which we form our conceptions of the nature of philosophy and of the nature of religion. These two great powers may and ought to be in accord, still they are different. To Religion belongs an influence of an elevated and universal kind; to philosophy an influence more restricted, and still very elevated. The one addresses itself to the entire soul, comprising in it the imagination; the other only addresses itself to the reason. The first sets out from mysteries, without which there is no religion; the second sets out from clear and distinct ideas, as has been said both by Descartes and by Bossuet. This distinction is the foundation of my philosophy and of my religion; and this distinction is also, in my view, the principle of their harmony. To confound them is, I think, an infallible mode of confusing them each by the other, as Malebranche has done. To absorb philosophy in religion gave, in Pascal, the result of a faith full of contradiction and of anguish; to

absorb religion in philosophy is an extravagant enterprise, of which sound philosophy must disapprove. To admit them both, each in its place, is truth, grandeur, and peace.

"Hence you perceive the reason of our differences of opinion, which are no more hurtful to our union, than they are to our old and sincere friendship."

I replied to him on the 13th of June :—

"I count, as well as you, my dear friend, upon our dissentiments not being hurtful to our old and sincere friendship; and I feel the more pleasure in so counting, because, independently of our particular and petty dissentiments, there is, as you say, between us a general, a profound difference of opinion. I think, as you do, that philosophy is not to be confounded or absorbed in religion, nor religion in philosophy. I regard them both as free in their manifestations and in their influence; but I do not found their distinction or their

accord upon the same grounds as you do. To me, philosophy is but a science, that is the work of man, limited in its sphere and reach, as is man's mind itself. Religion, in its principle and its history, is of divine origin and institution. The one springs from man's avidity of knowledge; the other is the light coming from God, 'which shines upon every man that comes into the world,' and which God continues to maintain and to shed over the world, according to his impenetrable designs, by the act, general or special, of his free will.

"I will not say more. We know, both of us, how far our opinions are in the same road, and where is the point of divergence."

I had left Paris when I received M. Cousin's letter. He was at Cannes when I returned to Paris. We never saw each other afterwards. He has preceded me to that region where light is shed upon the mysteries of this life. But in our last correspondence we had each touched in a few

words upon the knot of the whole question. It is this—What are the points of resemblance, and what of difference, between Religion and science, between Christianity and philosophy? Although M. Cousin and I agreed as to the reciprocal rights of these two influences to liberty of action, we entertained different sentiments as to their origin and their nature, and consequently as to the boundaries of their empire, and the character of their mission.

THIRD MEDITATION.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE.

It is the faith of Christians, and the point from which Christianity starts, that the Scriptures, which render an account of its origin, its dogmas, and its precepts, are divinely inspired. Not that Christians understand by these words that divine action upon the mind of man so often called inspiration, and of which Cicero said, "No one has ever been a great man without some divine inspiration;" * and of which Plato was thinking when he said, "It is not by art that they make these noble poems, but because a God is in them, by whom they are possessed. . . . They do not speak so by art, but by divine power." † The inspiration of the holy

* Pro Archiâ, c. 8.

† I have translated the Greek text literally, which M.

book of Christianity is quite a different thing: it is special and supernatural. There is divine inspiration in all the great works of man; these books are a work directly and personally inspired by God: they affirm this themselves. The language used by Jesus in the Gospels incessantly implies it; and, in numerous passages, the epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, declare it positively.*

This Christian principle of the special and divine inspiration of the Scriptures was not originally taken in so narrow an acceptation as in later times. In the first ages of the Christian era, the Christians of the school of Plato, whilst carefully distinguishing the inspiration of the sacred volumes from the inspiration of the great poets, strove to

Cousin has rendered with his accustomed elegance. (Jon., vol. iv. p. 249, et passim.) Note of author.

* In his History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age, M. Reuss acknowledges it: "This inspiration," says he, "was regarded as something unlike any other, and reserved to a few individuals chosen by Providence, and only to them upon special and solemn occasions;" and he refers to the different texts of the New Testament which prove his assertion. (Vol. i. p. 411, ed. 1860.)

determine the process common to these two kinds of inspiration, and to explain one by the other—"It is not by any effect of nature nor by any human faculty," says St. Justin, "that it is in the power of men to know things so grand and so divine; it is by the grace which descends from on high upon the saints. They have no need for any art to be revealed to them; pure themselves, they must offer themselves to the action of the divine spirit, in order that the divine bow, descending itself from heaven and making use of the just, in the same way as the musician does of the chords of a harp or lyre, may unfold to us the knowledge of things divine." "I think," says Athenagoras, "that you are not ignorant of Moses, or of Isaiah, or of the other prophets, who, being turned aside from any process of individual reasoning, and moved by the spirit of God, proclaimed aloud that which echoed within them, the holy spirit employing them and attaching itself to them as the player adds to his flute the breath which makes it discourse its music."

Questions soon began to be agitated in Christendom as to which of the religious books in circulation were really inspired, and as to which did not possess this divine characteristic. Hence proceeded disputes in respect to the Apocryphal books, and the formation of the Canon, or collection of the Holy Scriptures. But even in the very books, received by all as divinely inspired, great Christian doctors, not merely Origen, but St. Jerome and St. Augustin, discovered grammatical errors and faults which it was impossible to attribute to divine inspiration; and they distinguished, with greater or less exactness, the inspiration of God from the imperfection of man. St. Jerome points out solecisms in the Epistles of St. Paul; and St. Augustin says, in speaking of St. John, "I venture to say that John perhaps has not spoken of the thing as it really was, but only as it was in his power to speak; for he is a man, and he speaks of God. Inspired, no doubt, by God, but still a man. . . . When we meet with such diversity of expressions—although not

in themselves contradictory—used by the Evangelists, we should regard, in the words of each, only the intent with which the words are pronounced, and not, like wretched cavillers, attach an idea of truth to the external form of the letter; for we must seek the very spirit, not only in all the words, but in everything else which serve as symptoms of the manifestation of the spirit."

It was in the presence and in spite of these discussions, of this explanation and of this free criticism, that the divine inspiration of the Scriptures was nevertheless upheld in the fourth century as the common and positive faith of Christians.

I pass by the twelve following centuries: a long period; full of darkness, but yet with flashes of light; silent yet full of uproar, full of liberty and oppression: period beginning with the invasion of the Barbarians and terminating with the Renaissance; that period in short which, taken together, is called the Middle Age.

I transport myself at once to the sixteenth century, that epoch of political struggles, when

men reduced to systems, and reasoned upon, the different elements of moral and social institutions; for they had, ever since the fall of the Roman Empire, been fermenting pell-mell in Europe, which, although so small, was yet destined to conquer and civilize that globe, termed by us the world.

Striving to discover what, after the lapse of so many years and events, had become of the principle of the divine inspiration of the sacred books, that base of the religious faith and rule of Christian societies, I find that this question had received two solutions: one in the name of the Church of Rome, by its representative the Council of Trent; the other in the name of the Protestant churches, by their great founders and teachers. The Council of Trent "receives all the books both of the old and of the new Testament, since the same God is the author of each; surrounds them with the same respect, and with an equally pious reverence;" inserts in its decree the complete catalogue of these books, and "anathematises whoever does not accept as sacred and

canonical those books, with all that they contain, just as they are in use in the Catholic Church, and as they exist in the ancient Latin edition known as the Vulgate."*

The founders of the great Protestant Churches, although they began to apply the right of historical criticism to both texts and manuscripts, proclaimed nevertheless the absolute and complete inspiration of the holy volumes, in form and sense, narrative, precepts, and words. The Bible, all the Bible, the old, the new Testament, were, according to them, written at God's dictation to serve as the law of Christian Faith.

The Decree of the Council of Trent remains the Rule of the Church of Rome in the nineteenth century as much as it was in the sixteenth century; and in our days a Protestant Divine, justly respected for elevation of thought as much as for the energetic sincerity of his Faith, in maintaining the principle of the complete and

* Le Saint Concile de Trente, translated by the Abbé Chanut, pp. 10—13. Paris, 1686.

divine inspiration, and of the absolute infallibility, of the Bible, has been driven so far as to make this strange assertion: "All the expressions and all the letters of the ten commandments were certainly written by the finger of God, from the Aleph with which they begin, to the Caph with which they end;" a few pages further on he says: "The Decalogue, we repeat, was written entirely by the finger of Jehovah upon the two stone slabs."*

"Be on your guard," said Bossuet, "you assign to God arms and hands; unless you strip these expressions of all that savours of humanity, so as to leave nothing of arms and hands but their action and their force, you err. . . . God does everything by command; he has no lips to move, neither does he strike the air with his tongue to draw forth sounds from it; he has only to will, and his will is accomplished."†

* Théopneustie. By M. Gaussen. 2nd ed., 1842, pp. 225, 242.

† Élévations sur les Mystéres, vol. ix. pp. 66—68, 85, 109; and the Sixiéme Avertissement sur les lettres de Jurieu, vol. xxx. pp. 57, 134.

The empire of circumstances, both in the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, has had much to do with the adoption of these two doctrines, thus conceived and expressed. The Council of Trent, in order to cut short all controversies with the Reformers, took the Scriptures, and the interpretation of the Scriptures, under the guardianship of the supreme and infallible authority of the Church of Rome. The Reformers, in their turn, found their fixed point and a basis, firm in the midst of the movement to which they were giving the impulse, in the infallibility of the Bible, itself divinely inspired. And at the present time, on the one side the Church of Rome in its new dangers, and on the other side the Protestants, sincere in their ardent zeal to awaken that Christian Faith which is languishing, have pushed the two doctrines,—the former of ecclesiastical authority, the latter of biblical infallibility,—to their extremest verge: in my opinion each beyond the limits of right and of truth. History explains errors, it does not justify them. I resume, briefly:

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those with which I reproach the two doctrines referred to,—they severally infringe, the one the rights of religious liberty, the other those of human science. In both cases they greatly endanger that Christian Religion which they have, in these respects, severally ill understood.

I have already expressed my views upon this subject.* Fervent and learned men maintain "that all, absolutely all, in the Scriptures is divinely inspired—the words as well as the ideas, all the words used upon all subjects—the material of language, as well as the doctrine which lies at its base. In this assertion I see but deplorable confusion, leading to profound misapprehension both of the meaning and the object of the sacred books. It was not God's purpose to give instruction to men in grammar, and if not in grammar neither was it his purpose to give instruction in geology, astronomy, geo-

* Meditations on the Essence of Christianity. Sixth Meditation. Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, pp. 145—146. London, 1864.

graphy, or chronology. It is on their relations with their Creator, upon duties of men towards Him and towards each other, upon the rule of faith and of conduct in life, that God has lighted them by light from heaven. It is to the subject of religion and morals, and to these alone, that the inspiration of the Scriptures is directed."

I have read the Holy Scriptures scrupulously, and over and over again, with a view neither to criticise nor defend, with the sole object of familiarising myself with their character and sense. The more I advanced in this study, the longer I had lived in the Bible, the more did the two facts seem clear to me, the Divine truths and the human faults at once profoundly distinct and in intimate contact. I meet at each step in the Bible with God and with man: God, Being real and personal, to whom nothing happens, in whom nothing changes, Being identical and immovable in the midst of the universal movement, who gives of himself the unparalleled definition, "I am that I am:" on the other side man, Being incom-

plete, imperfect, variable, full of deficiencies and of contradictions, of sublime instincts and gross desires, of curiosity and ignorance, capable of good and of evil, and perfectible in the midst of his imperfection. What the Bible is incessantly showing us is, God and Man, their points of connection and their contests,—God watching over and acting upon man; man at one time accepting, at another rejecting, God's influence. The divine person and the human person, if the expression is permissible, are in each other's presence, each acting upon the other and upon events. It is the education of man after his Creation: his education as a religious and moral being, nothing less and nothing more. God does not, in thus educating man, change him: he created him intelligent and free: he enlightens him as to the religious and moral law with light from heaven; in other respects he leaves him absorbed in the laborious and perilous exercise of his intelligence and of his liberty as a free agent. At each epoch, in every circumstance, during his continuous action upon

man, God takes him as he finds him, with his passions, vices, defects, errors, ignorance; just such a being as he has made himself; nay, every day is making himself, by the good or bad use of his intelligence and of his freedom of action. This is the Biblical account, and the Biblical history of the relations of Man with God.

What a strange contrast, and still what an intimate and powerful connection exists, in this history, between those whom—how shall I dare to permit myself to call the two actors! God does not appear so elevated, so pure, so strange to imperfection, so untroubled by any human nature, so immutable and serene in the plenitude of the divine nature, so really God, in any tradition, invention of poetry, or in any mythology, as he is presented to us in the Bible. On the other hand, in no nation, in no historical narrative or document, does man show himself more violent and ruder, more brutal, more cruel, more prompt to ingratitude, and more rebellious to his God, than he is amongst the Hebrews. Nowhere else, and

in no history, is the distance so great between the divine sphere and the human region, between the sovereign and the subject. Still, Israel never entirely separates itself from God; and, in spite of vices and excesses, Israel returns to God, and recognises his law and empire, even whilst incessantly violating them. Nowhere, on the other hand, does God appear, in his turn, so occupied with man, does he at once exact so much from him and yet evince so much sympathy for him: he does not change him suddenly, by any act of his sovereign will; he is a witness to all his imperfections, all his weaknesses, and all his errors; nevertheless, he abandons him not; he holds ever steadily before him the torch of Heavenly Light, and never omits to interest himself in his destiny. The religious and moral idea is ever present and dominant; nowhere else have the business and labour of human science held so small a place in man's thoughts and man's society. God, and the relations of God and man, are the only subjects which fill the Holy volumes.

In what do those relations consist? By what results does this continuous action manifest itself, of God upon man; this incessant dialogue between God and man? By laws, precepts, and commands, religious and moral—God proposes these to man; he enjoins nothing more; he speaks to him of nothing else; demands nothing from him but obedience to his Law. God does not teach, he commands; God does not discuss, he warns. And the organs of God's speech, the men whom he takes for his interpreters and his prophets, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, do neither less nor more. Although superior to most of their contemporaries by reason of possessing certain attainments, they are no professors of human sciences: just as they speak the language of the common people whom they address, just so do they share most of their ignorance and errors respecting the objects and facts of the finite world, in the midst of which they are living. When they are made the medium for the religious and moral precepts and warnings of God, it

is then that they are no longer mere men of their time; it is then, only then, that the light of divine inspiration descends upon them, and that they diffuse it to all around them.

I do not wish to limit myself to a general summary only of what I regard as the essential character of the Holy Scriptures,—the simultaneous presence of the divine element and of the human element; the one in all its sublimity, the other in all its imperfection; God revealing to man in a certain place his religious law and his moral law, but without conveying elsewhere the divine light; God taking man as he finds him, in the points of time and of space in which he is placed, with all his barbarism and imperfections. I proceed, therefore, to consider some of the particular examples presented by the Scriptures, which make this great truth so evident as to be incontestable.

I open the book of Genesis and read:—

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.—And

he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.—And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. —Then on the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.—And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.—And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son: and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together.—And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?—And Abraham said, My son, God will pro-

vide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.—And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.—And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.—And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, here am I.—And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.—And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."

A man who, by his enlightened views, and the elevation of his mind, as well as by his faithfulness as a follower of Christ, is an honour to the church which he serves, Dr. Arthur Stanley,

Dean of Westminster, explains and characterises in these terms the Biblical truths to which I am referring.

"There have been," he says, "in almost all ancient forms of religion, and also in some of more modern date, two strong tendencies, each in itself springing from the best and purest feelings of humanity, yet each, if carried into the extremes suggested by passion or by logic, incompatible with the other and with its own highest purpose. One is the craving to please, or to propitiate, or to communicate with the powers above us, by surrendering some object near and dear to ourselves. This is the source of all sacrifice. The other is the profound moral instinct that the Creator of the world cannot be pleased, or propitiated, or approached by any other means than a pure life and good deeds. On the exaggeration, on the contact, on the collision of these two tendencies, have turned some of the chief difficulties of evangelical history. The earliest of them we are about to witness in the life of Abraham. . . . The sacrifice, the resignation

of the will in the father and the son was accepted; the literal sacrifice of the act was repelled. The great principle was proclaimed that mercy was better than sacrifice,—that the sacrifice of self is the highest and holiest offering that God can receive. . . . We have a proverb which tells us that man's extremity is God's opportunity."* Abraham was upon the point of accomplishing an act which, even in the presence of virtuous motives and a divine command, has been forbidden, and is held accursed by the subsequent Revelation and the sentiments of all whom it has enlightened. At this moment the hand of Abraham is stayed, and patriarchal religion is saved from the antagonism of a conflict between the rigour of the Hebrew law and the merciful dispensation of the Gospel.

The sentiment which Dean Stanley expresses has my full concurrence; but I go still further, and maintain that there is in the pathetic narrative of Abraham's sacrifice something more

* Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church. By Arthur P. Stanley, D.D. Vol. i. pp. 47, 48, 50. London, 1867.

than he points out. This interposition of God in order to arrest the very act which he has required is in accord with the general doctrine of the Bible, expressly condemning human sacrifices;* but Abraham's as well as several other examples prove how such sacrifices continued to exist in the ferocious traditions and manners, not only of several nations of Semitic origin, but even of the Hebrews themselves. God's intent is to try Abraham, and he pauses as soon as Abraham's obedience to the divine order is beyond doubt. Abraham does not hesitate to execute the divine command; he expresses no surprise at it. The sacrifice of Isaac is prepared, and very nearly consummated, as an event almost of course. Here we have man in the grossest and blindest condition of barbarism, in the presence of God, in whom as sovereign he believes, and whose sovereignty it is not his purpose to dispute.

It would be easy for me to multiply these

* Lev. xviii. 21; Deut. xii. 31; Ezek. xx. 26. This question is treated and conclusively solved in the Theologische Encyclopedie of Herzog, art. *Sacrifice*, vol. x. p. 621.

examples, and to show, in many other passages of the Bible, the following fundamental characteristic of Biblical History: the thought and word of man, although constantly in presence of the divine law and of the divine action, yet in contact and contrast with the thought and word of God. I prefer seeking for proofs in support of my conviction in a comparison of the Old and New Testaments, and in the light which Christianity sheds upon the Hebrew Revelation, which it does not contradict, but to which it applies a movement of progress.

I say progress,—progress immense, infinitely grander than man's imagination could ever have conceived,—and at the same time the character of the divine work remaining absolutely the same. It is no longer, as in the Old Testament, the stormy combat, the continuous struggle of God and of man in the events of the world and in the life of the people. God no longer interposes in the New Testament to warn or direct, to raise up or humble, to recompense or to punish man in this world; he decides no longer directly the issue of battle or

the destiny of states. It is still God, God in Jesus Christ, with all his sublimity: He, and He only, occupies and fills the place. He appears there under a different aspect. In his human form, He is weakness itself, intended and destined to become the very type of humility and of suffering; the voluntary victim, who expiates man's sin; the victim of man's fall. But in the midst of His miseries it is God, God as He was for Israel in all the splendour of His power. Christ's own knowledge of this appears throughout. He says it, He manifests it unceasingly by actions and by words; sometimes by natural effects, sometimes by miracles. And yet how different! what a range in the object and the bearing of His actions and of His words! In the Old Testament the scene concentrates itself upon a corner of the world, a single people, a petty nation, separated by God from the rest of the world, in order to withdraw it from the contagion of idolatry;—but now it is for the whole world, for all nations, for future as well as for living generations, for the Gentile as well as for the Jew, for

the barbarians of Malta as well as for the Greeks of Athens, that the God of the New Testament manifests Himself and speaks; it is over the whole of humanity that He spreads His light and orders His servants to extend His empire.

He does more, much more. That divine light which Jesus comes to spread over the whole world, although it continues to emanate from the same fountain, becomes more complete and more pure. Jesus is the first to recognise the fact that the ancient law, although issuing from God, bears here and there traces of human errors and passions. "I am not come," says he, "to abolish the law, but to fulfil it." How fulfil it? By removing the errors with which it had become intermixed owing to the imperfect nature of the men, of the time, and of the place, at which it appeared, and by filling up the gaps which that imperfection had entailed. He disentangles the ancient law from every human element, and brings it back to its one divine element, its one pure and perfect source. I refrain from all argument or commentary. I will

not cite anything in proof of this grand fact but those very texts of the Ancient and of the New Testament which embody their most essential precepts.

I read in Exodus, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." * Jesus effaces this *lex talionis*. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." †

It is said in the book of Deuteronomy: "When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." ‡ I read in the New Testament: "And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is

* Exod. xxi. 24, 25. † Matt. v. 43, 44.
‡ Deut. xxiv. 1.

it lawful for a man to put away his wife? . . . . And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

The Mosaic law condemns to death every adulterer: "If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel."† Jesus is called upon to pronounce upon the very case: "And

* Mark x. 2—9; Matt. xix. 3—9.
† Deut. xxii. 22.

the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery; in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord.

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."*

The Mosaic law is full of minute ceremonial regulations, and of rigorous conditions, which attach to the performance of certain external acts, in certain appointed places, the duty of adoration and of prayer. Not only does Jesus object to the Scribes and Pharisees that they place all their faith and their piety in the acts alone; he does more; he gives his disciples personally a lesson of striking simplicity by teaching them the Lord's Prayer; and when the Samaritan woman, whom he meets near the well of Jacob, says to him: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. . . Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, ... the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that

* John viii. 3—11.

worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

Thus Jesus, not to abolish but to accomplish the ancient law, and to make it harmonise with the new and universal work which he is about, separates from the law that which the imperfection of man had introduced in it in other times, and for a more limited work; he leaves in it nothing but the divine element in all its purity and empire. He only leaves to the divine element its religious and moral empire, for it is in its name alone that he speaks; the religious and moral law is the only law revealed by Jesus, and extended over the entire world; no other thought mixes itself with his doctrine, no other motive influences his action; political science, human science, have absolutely no place at all in the New Testament; Jesus does not think of satisfying either social ambition or intellectual curiosity; he desires to make neither kings nor doctors; as soon as he finds such

* John iv. 20, 21, 23, 24.

pretensions advanced, he sets them aside; "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."*

Jesus occupies himself with man's soul alone, with the human being in his native simplicity; the relations of man, of every man, with God; the state and destiny of the human soul, of every human soul, in the present and in the future: this is the sole idea, the sole mission, of the New Testament. Jesus knows that when once accomplished this will bring with it its own salutary consequences: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."†

I do not hesitate, then, to affirm, that human science, in its different and special objects,—whe-

* Matt. xxii. 21; xi. 25. † Matt. vi. 33.

ther astronomy, geology, geography, chronology, physics, historical criticism,—is as foreign to the object as it is to the source of the sacred Volumes. In the sciences we have the domain of the mind of man left to itself, and to itself alone. They are the fruits, assiduously cultivated and slowly acquired by the laborious exertions of the human intellect during a succession of ages. If, then, you meet, in Scriptural texts, not treating of acts declared miraculous, terms and assertions apparently repugnant to facts recognised as truths in these different sciences, feel no disquietude. It is not there that God has set up His divine torch; it is not there that God has spoken. The language is the language of the men of the different epochs, men who speak according to the measure of their knowledge or of their ignorance, the language which they are obliged to speak in order to be understood by their contemporaries. I feel surprised that men should require to be told this, so simple, so clear is it. In matters of religion and of morality there have always existed, and in every

place there have existed, spontaneous instincts, aspirations, and ideas common to all men, which lead them to employ a similar language,—a language comprehended and received by all who hear it, whatever in other respects may be their inequality in attainments and civilization; whereas, in matters purely scientific we find nothing at all like this; men in the mass see and speak of these, not as they are to the eye of science, but according to their appearances, and so men comprehend or do not comprehend them, hear them or do not hear them, according to the degree of scientific knowledge or of ignorance prevalent at the time and place at which they live. What would the Hebrews in the Desert, or the Jews about the person of Christ, or the savages of the Pacific have said to his missionaries, if they had been told that it is the earth which turns round the sun, that its shape is that of a spheroid, that it is habitable and inhabited at opposite points of its circumference? What is more natural, what more inevitable, than that the language

of the Scriptures should agree with the scientific imperfection of men upon all these matters, even where that language is full of divine inspiration as to the religious or moral law of humanity?

No one honours science more than I do, no one feels a greater admiration for it. It is a mission that man has to perform, and it is one of his glories; but it has no place in the relation of man with God, and in the action of God upon man. God is no sublime, no mighty doctor, who reveals truths of science to man, to give him the noble pleasure of contemplating them, or of publishing them; he has left such researches to labours purely human. The work of God is more complex and grander: it is essentially practical. That of which man, every man, stands in need, that after which he thirsts, that which all mankind asks of God, simple as well as learned, is to be enlightened as to the religious and moral truths which are to regulate his soul and his life, and to decide his lot in eternity. It is to all mankind that God responds;

it is to the salvation of all men that the Scripture applies itself. A celebrated philosopher, a man of a mind lofty and sincere, but one of the most lost of the great lost ones of the human intelligence, thought differently. According to Spinoza, "all men are far from being called to enjoy eternal life in the same plenitude. . . . After death the reason, —just ideas survive; all the rest perishes. Souls governed by reason, philosophical souls, who even from the moment when their life in this world ceases, live in God, are consequently exempt from death; for death deprives them only of that which is of no value. But those dim and feeble souls, upon which reason hardly gleams at all, those souls made up entirely, so to say, of empty imaginings and passions, perish almost entirely; and death, instead of coming to them as a simple accident, penetrates to the very bottom of their being. The soul of the sage, on the contrary, cannot be more than barely troubled; possessing, by a sort of eternal necessity, the consciousness of itself and of God, and of things as they really are, it never

ceases to exist; and as for real tranquillity of soul, it possesses it for ever." *

I know not if human pride ever gave expression to a thought showing a stranger aberration of intellect; and in spite of the favour with which some men of distinguished abilities endeavour at the present day to encircle the name of Spinoza, I do not believe that there is any chance, at an epoch when war is declared against all privileges, for philosophers to make good their exclusive claim to the privilege of immortality.

* Œuvres de Spinoza. According to the translation of Emile Saisset. Introduction, vol. iii. p. 291.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

CHRISTIAN IGNORANCE.

When I use the term "Christian Ignorance," I would not have either the sense which I attach to the expression, or the intention with which I use it, misunderstood. I do not think that it should be denied to man to make any use of his intelligence, to exercise any right to inquire freely after truth, or after any kind of truth. Is the field which is open to the human mind limited in extent? Is the mind itself of limited reach? Is there a difference of degree in human knowledge according as the objects are different to which it is applied? These are questions, all of them, fundamentally contained in the words "Christian Ignorance;" and of these questions it is my aim to offer what appears to me to be the right solution.

I am in the presence of four sciences, and of six schools or systems, which have made, are making, and will always continue to make, much noise in the world. The sciences are, Physiology, Psychology, Ontology, and Theology. The systems to which these sciences have given birth are, Materialism, Positivism, Scepticism, Spiritualism, Scientific Theology, Mystical Theology. I am far from meaning to discuss here the principles of these systems, or to attempt to determine their value; it would be to undertake the task of examining all philosophy and all philosophies. I mean to touch only upon one of the special questions which furnish in our days matter of debate between Christianity and these different schools. It is thus, and thus only, that I can clearly establish the sense which I attach to the words "Christian Ignorance;" and determine, at the same time, their bearing and their limitation.

I have, and for very simple reasons, little to say respecting the first three systems to which

I have just referred, *i. e.*, Materialism, Positivism, Scepticism. By its denial of the distinction of the soul and the body, of mind and matter, Materialism rejects Psychology, and arrives, as far as Ontology is concerned, only at Atheism or at Pantheism. Of the four great philosophical sciences, Physiology is the only one with which Materialism has any concern. Amongst Positivists, some, the more eminent, admit, it is true, the reality of Objects, or to speak more exactly, the reality of the domain of Psychology and of Ontology; but in admitting it they declare it to be inaccessible to the human mind: "Inaccessible," says M. Littré, "not null or non-existent; it is an ocean which washes our shore, and for which we have neither bark nor sail." * That is to say, that, according to Positivists, Psychology, Ontology, and Theology are not—cannot be—sciences. As for sceptics, they contest to the human mind all certitude, and especially certitude with respect to the subject-matters of Psy-

* A. Comte et la Philosophie Positive. By M. Littré, p. 519.

chology, Ontology, and Theology. The fundamental principle of Christian belief is then too absolutely strange to those three schools for it to be necessary that I should discuss with them the source, bearing, and legitimacy of that which I term "Christian Ignorance."

It is only with Spiritualists, with scientific Theologians, and with mystic Theologians, that it is possible to discuss this question of Christian Ignorance, for the three schools to which they belong are the only ones which, in the same way as Christianity itself does, open to the human mind the domain of the four sciences—Physiology, Psychology, Ontology, and Theology, and which recognise the right of the human mind there to search after truth, and the possibility of its being there discovered.

When I speak of Spiritualists, a preliminary remark is indispensable. Christianity is as spiritualistic, not to say more so, than Spiritualism itself. It is not, then, with Spiritualism in general, and with all Spiritualists without dis-

tinction, that Christians have to deal in the question of "Christian Ignorance," as it has in other questions; the discussion here lies between Christianity and Rationalistic Spiritualism alone; and not only between Rationalism and Christian ignorance, but also between Rationalistic science and Christian science.

Rationalistic Spiritualism admits the reality of Psychology, of Ontology, and of Theology, just as it does that of Physiology; it admits that these different sciences owe their birth and development necessarily to the spectacle of the universe, of men and of things, and have for their object the solution of the questions which this spectacle suggests. But this great fact once admitted, Rationalism places in Psychology, and in Psychology alone, the starting-point and the fulcrum of Ontology and of Theology; it only admits in these two sciences results to which the human mind attains by its own unaided efforts, that is to say, by way of observation and of reasoning; it recognises for human knowledge,

with respect to Ontology and Theology, no source other than human reason. Christianity opens to Ontology and Theology a larger sphere and other sources of knowledge: besides the psychological facts supplied to these two sciences by observation and reasoning, it recognises historical facts as truths, not only which they are bound themselves to admit, but which they have a right to demand that others shall admit; Christianity does not make the human mind the sole object of its belief; it believes also in the history of Humanity, and finds in that History facts to the truth of which centuries, and the traditions of centuries, have testified, which it therefore holds, and is bound to hold, as well proved and as certain as any physical or psychological fact proved by the observations of contemporary science. The Creation, the primitive Revelation, the Mosaic Revelation, the Evangelical Revelation, are in Christian Doctrine historical facts which Ontology and Theology take, with reason, as the elementary data and the legitimate bases of science.

I am here met by a fundamental objection made to these facts and to their scientific authority; they are, it is said, opposed to the permanent laws of nature and of reason, as well as of human experience; science cannot admit supernatural facts. I have no intention in merely passing to re-enter here upon this great question; I have already expressed unreservedly my opinion with respect to it,* and upon some other occasion I shall return to it; for, if I do not deceive myself, the question has not hitherto been properly sounded and to the depth which it demands. Here I confine myself to referring to two ideas—facts, rather—absolutely forgotten or ignored by the systematic opponents of the supernatural.

Liberty, free agency, in presence of the external or internal causes which operate upon the will, is the peculiar and distinctive characteristic of man. It is by this that man separates him-

* Meditations on the Essence of Christianity. Third Meditation: "The Supernatural," pp. 84—108. London, 1864.

self from and raises himself above nature, understanding by the term the ensemble of things determined by laws general, anterior, permanent. Man alone has it in his power to commence a new series of facts foreign to any general law, and originating in his will alone. To deny such facts, is to deny that man is a free agent, and to make him a machine regulated by external and fatal laws; that is to say, to drive man back to the condition of that nature which is substantially governed by laws of this kind, and thus to abolish at one blow human morality and human liberty.

The blow strikes still higher—it would abolish God. God, who created man, is, and was previous to the existence of his creations, a being essentially free; for liberty cannot be the daughter of Fatality. It is in the free divine volition that human Liberty has its source, and man's Liberty itself testifies to the source from which it emanates. By denying human liberty, we throw not only man but God into the condition of

physical nature, that is to say, into the ensemble of causes obedient to fate, and deprived of all moral essence; that is to say, we plunge into Pantheism, which, in spite of Spinoza and Goethe, in spite of all the efforts of logical reasoning or poetic imagination, is, in ultimateanaly sis, nothing more than Atheism.

The systematic opponents of the supernatural must submit to this consequence. Most of them, I am certain, are far from being disposed to accept it, and would indeed repudiate it with the most honourable perseverance. Vain efforts! Driven from entrenchment to entrenchment, from fall to fall, they will be finally reduced to this extremity; and if divine wisdom had not assigned limits to the force of man's Logic, the practical consequences of such a system would soon make themselves evident in the moral and social condition of humanity.

There is a second necessity to which the systematic opponents of the supernatural must make up their minds. They must affirm that the laws

proclaimed by them as general laws, laws immanent and permanent in what they call nature, are in effect the essential laws of all nature, of the entire universe, and of all the beings whose seeds are there sown. They would have no right to reject absolutely facts as supernatural if they were not supernatural of necessity and everywhere; if, in short, they were anywhere in harmony with laws of nature other than the laws of this hardly perceptible corner of nature which is the residence of man. If the laws of our world are not universal and absolute, who will venture to affirm that they cannot be changed or suspended, even there where they reign? Is human science ready to maintain that the laws which she discovers from her infinitely small Observatory are in effect universal and absolute laws in every place where matter exists, and where life manifests itself, in the midst of space and of time?

Here it is that Christian Ignorance begins to take its place; it admits the unknown and the

diverse in the universe—an unknown incommensurable, a diverse infinitely possible. I respect and admire science profoundly; I am as moved, I feel as proud as M. de Laplace could ever have been at the aspect of this sublime flight of the human intelligence, which marches with sure footing in space and across worlds, measures their distances, and knows how many years are required for the light of the nearest of the fixed stars to reach us, whereas the light of our own sun reaches us in a few minutes. I am not less touched by the labours and the discoveries of the great modern Physiologists, who, walking in the footsteps of Bichat, observe and note, even in their minutest and most obscure details, the different phenomena which life in the midst of matter presents. But when I have rendered homage to these triumphs of human science, I compare them with the reality of things, with this universe infinitely great and infinitely minute, which man makes his study, and I cannot prevent the reflection, that the universe contains infinitely more objects

than man's mind attains to, and infinitely more secrets than it discovers. What astronomer will dare to affirm that he has counted all the worlds, and that his eye has reached the point beyond which no more exist? What physiologist, what naturalist, will affirm that all those worlds have living inhabitants? and that, if so, those inhabitants must have the same form, and be subject to the same conditions and laws, as govern the inhabitants of this globe. Our science becomes very modest when set side by side with our ignorance, even in the matters appropriate to science; and, however extensive and various the conquests of the human mind may be, the universe is infinitely vaster and more varied than is either the genius or the strength of its vain conqueror. Knowing this, and without ceasing to admire the works of human science, Christian Ignorance bows humbly before that work of God, which outstrips and surpasses immeasurably every attainment of man.

Thus on two sides, and by two different pro-

cesses, Christianity has a higher point of view, and penetrates further into the reality of things than Rationalistic Spiritualism. On the one side, by allowing its place to historic facts which are the life of mankind, as well as to psychological facts which are the life of man's soul, Christianity gives to Christian science a deeper, a broader foundation than rationalistic science supplies. On the other side, Christianity admits, both with greater grandeur and with more modesty than Rationalism, the unfathomable immensity of the universe, as well as the infinite diversity of its possible laws; and by the avowal of a "Christian Ignorance," it places itself, at least, at the most elevated point to view the spectacle of which human science cannot traverse or measure the extent.

It is in the presence of another rival, I do not say of another adversary, that I have now to set Christian Ignorance. I begin by asking learned Theologians to forgive the freedom of my thoughts and of my speech; I feel for them a sincere senti-

ment of respect, let me say brotherly respect; for in the question to which I address myself I am now to deal with Christians. But actuated by the same feeling as that which influenced me when I was before speaking of the relation of the sacred writings to human science, I must declare my profound conviction that the subject which is here being treated is of pressing interest to Christian Religion in the great struggle in which it is engaged.

The Christian Religion is founded upon facts, upon an uninterrupted series of facts recorded in documents which exist. Whether the authenticity or the authority of any part of these documents, the reality or even the possibility of any of the facts which they contain is admitted or contested, it is not the less true that Christianity is not, as Greek Paganism was, a poetical mythology attributed to fabulous times; as the religion of Zoroaster was, a personification of the great forces and of the great phenomena of nature; or as the writings of Confucius were, a collection of philosophical me-

ditations, and of moral precepts and counsels, for the use of wise and simple, of princes and subjects. I am far from contesting that poetry and philosophy, human imagination and human meditation, have their share in the books which form the documents of Christianity; it is at the same time incontestible, however, that the peculiar and essential characteristic of Christianity, from its very origin down to its latest development, is that it is historical: we behold the Christian Religion starting to life, living, traversing centuries, growing great and independent, just as we behold civil society doing, in a series of facts which succeed to one another and are different from one another. Christianity is not merely a religious doctrine; it is the history of the events wherein have been manifested the relations of God to man, and the action of God upon the destinies of Mankind.

In proportion to the vigour with which these events have developed and spread themselves, the human mind has been exposed to two tempta-

tions, which constitute at once its honour and its peril, the temptation of explanation and that of controversy.

What an undertaking! to explain God! his relation to man! the means and the process of his action upon man! Even when he essays to study, and to describe, the Nature of the God in whom he believes, Man's vision is troubled by the dazzling light; his thought exhausts itself, loses itself in the vain effort to attain, by means of comparisons and figures of all kinds, to the Divine Person: he conceives that person, he affirms that person, he contemplates that person, and yet that person he cannot know, cannot explain. The nearer he feels himself to God, the more does Man cast his eyes down, the more lowly does he incline himself, to adore, where he cannot pretend to observe. Even the very presence of God does not aid man in attaining to the science of God. What, then, the result where he would seek closely to follow the agency of God in the facts in which he only sees Him imperfectly,—where

he attempts to carry the torch of human science into the depths of the secrets of Divine action ?

I here enter into the domain which Christianity ignores. Two examples will fully suffice, I hope, to make my meaning clear.

The Divinity of Jesus, God's incarnation in Jesus, Jesus God and Man, these are the truths admitted, proclaimed, incessantly repeated in different forms, by the Gospels and the primitive documents of Christianity. I have already said * that "it is the fact itself of the Incarnation which constitutes the Christian faith, and which rises above all definitions and all theological controversies. To disregard this fact—to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ—is to deny, to overthrow the Christian religion, which would never have been what it is, and would never have accomplished what it has, but that the Divine Incarnation was its principle, and Jesus Christ—God and Man—its author."

* Meditations on the Essence of Christianity. Second Meditation, pp. 75, 76.

But Christians have not confined themselves to the belief of this sublime truth ; they have striven to explain it; they have sought to know and to define how, and when, the divine nature and the human nature became united in Jesus Christ, to what extent such union took place, and what effect it produced upon Christ's personality. Hence all the questions, all the controversies, which were raised as to the mode and the consequences of the divine incarnation, by Nestorius and Eutyches, and which in the councils of Constantinople, of Ephesus and Chalcedon, divided and agitated the Christian Church, especially in the East.

Man had here essayed to construct a science of Religion and of divine History.

The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, as unanimously and persistently as they have proclaimed the Incarnation, contain and proclaim another great truth of Christianity, the co-existence of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and their combined action upon the human soul.

The Trinity is written in the New Testament, where it takes its place in the history and in the Faith of Christ from their very beginning. Here, again, men have refused to restrict themselves to History, or to a belief in History; they have essayed to determine the elements, and to explain the "quomodo" of the religious truth; in other words, to transform history into science. Hence all the controversies, all the contests, all the authoritative decisions which have pretended to fix the nature, rank, and relations of the three Divine persons, or the manner of the one God's existence and action in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I enter into none of these controversies; I examine none of the doctrines and decisions which those controversies have either originated, or disputed; I now only seek to determine their essential character; it is the transition from divine truth to human science: it is Theology, the offspring, more or less legitimate, of Religion.

When I say its offspring more or less legitimate, and speak of Theological science in these

guarded terms, it is not that I do not design to say openly all that I think upon the subject. The scientific Theology of Christianity commands often my admiration, always my respect. In their effort to explain the grand facts of the Old and New Testament, its writers have addressed themselves to a glorious task; they have in pursuing it fallen upon and thrown light upon sublime truths; they have engaged for the cause of Christianity in formidable contests; they have lent a moral influence often pregnant of effect to the institutions and authorised teachers of Christ's religion. But their efforts have been even more ambitious than energetic, more compromising than efficacious; they have, even with the words unceasingly in their mouths, shown an ignorance of the limits of human science. The Christian Religion is a miracle, the miraculous work of God; this was the point from which they started, their fundamental datum; forgetting what they have so affirmed, they have sought and they have thought to ensure the triumph of the divine truth by explaining it;

they have obscured and changed it by an intermixture of man's work. Man can recognise as realities the facts which are at the same time both Christian dogmas and Christian mysteries. Man can recognise his own subjection to them, but it is not given to man to make of them a science.

Bossuet also essayed to fathom the Trinity; in the midst of his explanations and of his comparisons, he stops short and exclaims : " I do not know who can vaunt that he understands that perfectly, or who can satisfy himself as to what the modes of being can add to being, or as to whence arises their distinction in the unity and the identity which they have with the being itself. All this is not very comprehensible ; all this, nevertheless, is truth."*

Thus after this final effort of his genius, it was in Christian ignorance that the last great doctor of the Church was forced to take refuge.

It is not only that these attempts of Scientific

* Élévations sur les Mystères. Works of Bossuet, vol. ix., p. 49.

Theology are unsuccessful, they entail, as experience painfully shows, a serious danger. Pride is the ordinary companion of science, and what pride equal to the pride of the science which dares to believe that it has penetrated the secrets of God's action and of man's destiny! Scientific Theology has had the greatest share in religious persecutions; its doctors have had to defend not only their faith but their system, not only God's work but their own work and this simultaneously. Those whose systems were the most logical have generally been the most tyrannical; history in this respect fully confirms what independently of history might fairly be presumed; namely, that supposing the faith equal, "Christian ignorance" is far more naturally and readily inclined to moderation and charity than Theological science.

But it is not only the scientific Theologians whose ambition and efforts have led them to mount beyond the sphere of human science; others there are who fall in a different manner into the same error and the same peril. The

Mystic Theologians ask for light as to the relations of God to man, not from dialectics and reasoning, but from sentiment and inspiration. They admit between God and man a direct and mysterious communication, which, in certain cases and upon certain conditions, conveys to the human being divine revelations of a character personal and individual. With this torch in the hand they approach the questions which concern grace, prayer, and the destiny awarded by Providence to each creature, and flatter themselves that they are able to raise the veil by which the solution of such questions is hidden.

I cannot contemplate without profound emotion these pious impulses of the human soul, desirous of penetrating the secrets of God. What more excusable than that ardent and trembling curiosity in the midst of the darkness of our life and destiny? Whoever believes really in God cannot fail to believe himself under the eye and in the power of God; how, indeed, would it be possible for him to admit

that his Creator is indifferent and powerless? There are, it may be added, very few who, at certain moments and under certain circumstances, have not felt, in the innermost recesses of their being, a stirring, an impulsion, not proceeding from themselves, nor from the world around them, inexplicable to them, except as proceeding from a superior source and power. Who of us has not, in the course of his life, been sometimes aware of a design foreign to his own volition, his own forecast, conducting him to an end which he did not forecast? And, finally, in the infinite number of prayers rising to God from the midst of human misery and suffering, are there not some to which the event brings satisfaction, just as there are others with respect to which the contrary is the case? Hence the problems of the divine Grace, the divine Providence, the efficacy of prayer. No doubt the desire is very natural which passionately aspires to solve problems so grand, and which, in the hope to do so, strives to rise to a direct and personal communication with

their Divine author. But the more natural the desire, the more profound the error. No doubt God acts upon us, upon our soul, and upon our destiny, by his providence and by his grace; no doubt he hears and listens to our prayers; but it is not given to us to foresee his action and his answer, nor to appreciate them in their motives and their effects. "The ways of God are not our ways." Whether general problems are submitted to man's intelligence, or questions touching him personally trouble his soul; whether the Doctors of Theology construct systems, or the Mystic Theologians fall into ecstasies, we see in all these cases that man has arrived at limits which oppose an effectual barrier to his scientific vision, and which no transports of piety will ever enable him to overleap. Beyond those limits, the condition imposed by God upon man is confidence in spite of ignorance; or in other words, "Christian Ignorance" which is gage at once for his wisdom, his charity, and his liberty.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

FORTY years ago, upon the appearance of a work of the Abbé Bautain, entitled "The Morality of the Gospel compared with the Morality of the Philosophers," I published, in the "Revue Française," an essay upon that state of the human soul which is called Faith, upon the different intellectual facts which it expresses, and the different ways by which man attains to it. Although my special subject, at present, is no longer Faith in its abstract sense, but of Faith in Christ, it is not foreign to my purpose to lay before readers in the year 1868 some passages which appeared in my essay in 1828. For notwithstanding the imperfection of the essay referred to, I have not ceased to regard it as

founded on just reasoning; it serves as a starting-point for that Meditation upon Christian Faith which I now give to the press.

"By the word faith is commonly understood a certain belief in facts or dogmas of a special nature—in facts or dogmas of religion. This word, indeed, has only this meaning, when in speaking of *the faith* the term is used alone and absolutely. This, however, is neither its sole meaning, nor its fundamental meaning; it has a still more extended sense from which its religious sense is derived. Expressions like the following are met with:—"I have full *faith* in your words; this man has *faith* in himself—in his strength—in his fortune, &c." This employment of the word *faith* in secular matters, so to say, occurs more frequently in the present day; it is, however, no recent invention, and religious ideas have never been so exclusively its sphere that the word faith has not had also other significations attached to it.

It appears, then, by the usages of common

speech and popular opinion, 1st, that the word *faith* designates a certain internal condition of the person who believes, and not merely a certain species of belief: that it refers to the nature itself of the conviction, not to its object; 2ndly, that this word was, nevertheless, in its origin, and still is, more generally applied to those kinds of belief termed religious. What then, in its special and ordinary application to religious belief, are the variations which have taken place in its meaning, and which are taking place every day?

Men engaged in teaching and preaching a religion, a doctrine, a religious reform, sometimes whilst appealing to the whole energy of the human mind in its state of liberty, succeed in producing in their disciples an entire, profound, and powerful conviction of the truth of their teaching. This conviction is called *Faith;* a name which neither masters and disciples will repudiate, nor even their adversaries disallow. Faith then is only a profound and imperious conviction of the truth of a dogma of religion; it

matters little whether the conviction has been acquired by way of reasoning, or has been generated by controversy, or by free and rigorous examination; that which gives to it its character, and entitles it to the name of *Faith*, is its energy, is the empire which that energy gives to it over the whole man. Such at every time was the faith of the great Reformers, and more especially in the sixteenth century, such the faith of their most illustrious disciples, of Calvin after Luther, and Knox after Calvin.

The same men have preached the same doctrine to persons whom it was impossible for them to convince by the use of reasoning, by an appeal to examination, or to science, to women and crowds of persons incapable alike of laborious study and of lengthened reflection. They spoke to the imagination, to the moral affections, where the persons whom they addressed were prone to feel emotion, and to believe in consequence of emotion. They gave the name of *Faith* to the result of their action, just as they had done so to the

result of the process essentially intellectual of which I was before speaking. Faith thus instilled was a religious conviction, not acquired by reasoning, and deriving its origin in human sensibility. This is the idea of faith as entertained by the Mystic Sects.

Appeals to human sensibility and human emotion have not always sufficed to generate faith. Another spring of human influence has been resorted to; and men have been commanded to adhere to practices and to form habits. Man must sooner or later attach ideas to the acts which are habitual to him, and attribute a meaning to that which produces in him a constant effect. The mind was led to the belief of the principles which had given birth to certain practices and habits. A new kind of faith appeared, it had for its principle and dominant characteristic, the submission of the mind to an authority invested with the right at once to govern man's life and to regulate his thought.

Finally, faith has not everywhere nor con-

stantly been generated in the human mind, either by the free exercise of the intelligence, or by appeals to sensibility, or by the formation of habits. It was then said that faith was incommunicable, that it was not in man's power to impart faith, or to acquire it by any exertion of his own, that for this purpose God's intervention and the action of his grace were necessary. Divine grace became thus the preliminary condition of faith and its definitive character.

The word *faith* has, consequently, in turn expressed: 1st, a conviction acquired by the free efforts of the human intelligence; 2ndly, a conviction acquired by way of the sensibility, and without the concurrence of the reason, and often even against its authority; 3rdly, a conviction acquired by man's long submission to a power invested with a power from on high to command conviction; 4thly, a conviction induced by supernatural means,—by divine grace.

What in the midst of this variety of sources from which it may emanate is the essential and

invariable character of faith? What is the state of the soul in which faith reigns when we consider it independently of its origin and of its object?

Two kinds of belief exist in man: the one, I will not call it innate, for this is an inexact and justly criticised expression, but a belief natural and spontaneous which springs up and establishes itself in the mind of man, if not without his being aware of it, at least without the help of any reflection or volition on his part, by the development alone of his nature and the influence of that external world in the midst of which his life is passed; the other kind of belief is the result of laborious examination and reflection, the fruit of voluntary study and of the power possessed by man either to concentrate all his faculties upon a certain object with the design of mastering it, or to direct the thought inwards, and realise what is there taking place—to render an account thereof to himself, and thus to acquire by an act of volition and of reflection, a knowledge which he did not before possess, although the facts which form its

object nevertheless existed as facts external—and which he might see by his eyes,—or as facts which were taking place within him.

Of these two kinds of belief which merits the name of *faith?*

It seems at first sight that the name is perfectly suitable to that kind of belief which I have termed natural and spontaneous: such belief is exempt from doubt and disquietude; it directs man in his judgment, in his actions, and with an empire which he dreams neither of eluding nor contesting; it is ingenuous, unhesitating, practical, sovereign; who would not recognise in it the characteristics of *faith?*

Faith has in effect two characters; but it has at the same time others which belief natural and spontaneous has not. Almost unnoticed by the man who is yet guided by it, this natural and spontaneous belief is to him, as it were, a law from without which he has received, not accepted; which he obeys by instinct without having given it any intimate and personal assent.

It suffices for the exigencies of his life; it guides him, admonishes him, impels him, or checks him; but without, so to say, any concurrence on his own part, without giving birth in him to the sentiment that any active, energetic, or powerful principle is stirring within him, without procuring him the profound joy of contemplating, loving, adoring the truth which reigns over him. *Faith*, on the contrary, has this power; faith is not science, neither is it ignorance; the mind which faith penetrates has never yet, perhaps, rendered a true account to itself of that in which it has faith; and, perhaps, never will do so; but the mind is, nevertheless, certain of it; to the mind it is present, living; it is no longer a general belief, a law of human nature which governs the moral man, as the law of gravitation governs bodies; it is a personal conviction, a truth which the moral man has made his own by force of contemplation, of voluntary obedience, and love. Henceforth this truth does much more than suffice to his life, it satisfies his soul; it does much more

than direct him; it enlightens him. How many, for instance, live under the empire of a natural and instinctive belief that moral good and moral evil exist, without our being able to affirm that they have *faith* in them. Such belief is in them, as it were, a master undisputed; to whom, nevertheless, they render no homage, whom they obey without seeing and without loving. But if a circumstance, a cause, however trivial, revealing, so to say, the conscience to itself, should attract and fix their attention upon this distinction between moral good and evil, which is a spontaneous law of their nature; should they knowingly acknowledge and accept it as their legitimate master, should their intelligence honour itself by comprehending it, and their liberty do itself honour by obeying it; should they feel their soul, as it were, the sanctuary of a sacred law, as the focus into which this truth concentrates and establishes itself in order thence to diffuse its rays of light; this is no longer simple natural belief, it is *faith*.

Faith, then, does not exclusively consist of either of the two kinds of belief which at first sight seem to share between them the soul of man; it partakes at once of natural and spontaneous belief and of the belief which is the fruit of reflection and science; yet it differs from each; like the latter, it is individual and intimate; like the former confidant, active, dominant. Considered in itself, independently of all comparison with any other particular and analogous state of the intellect, faith is the full security of man in the possession of his belief, as absolved from effort, as exempt from doubt; the path which the mind has pursued in arriving at it is obliterated, and a sentiment only is left behind of the natural and pre-existent harmony between the mind of man and the truth itself. To the man whose mind faith penetrates, his intelligence and his volition present no longer any problems for solution as to the things which are the objects of his faith: he feels himself in full possession of the truth to light and to guide him on his way,

and in full possession of himself to act according to the truth.

As faith has internal characteristics which are peculiar to it, it has also, with some strange and rare exceptions, external conditions which are necessary to it; it is distinguishable from other modes of human belief, not only by its nature, but by its object. Up to a certain point these conditions may be determined and perceived, although imperfectly, according to the nature itself of that state of the soul and of its effects. A belief may be so entire and sure of itself that no further effort of the intellect seems necessary, and the believer, wholly absorbed in the truth which in his judgment he possesses, may lose all memory of the way by which he arrived at it. A conviction may be so forcible as to become master of his every action, as well as of every impulse of his mind, and may imperatively force and morally oblige him to submit all things to its empire; a state this of the intellect which is the fruit, perhaps, not merely of the exercise of the

intelligence, but of a strong emotion, of a long obedience to certain practices, and in the midst of which all the three great faculties of man, the sensibility, the intelligence, and the will, are simultaneously in activity, and simultaneously satisfied. Where all this is the case, the occasion which has induced such a situation of the soul, had need be one worthy of the soul, and of its situation; the subject with which it is so occupied, had need be one which embraces the entire man, which sets in play all his faculties; responding to all the requirements of his moral nature, it has a right in return to all his devotedness.

The characteristics of ideas proper to become really a faith would seem *à priori* to be intellectual beauty, and practical importance. An idea which should present itself to the mind as true, without at the same time striking it by the extent or the gravity of its consequences, might produce certitude; but the name of *faith* would not be suitably applied to it. Nor would the

practical merit, or the immediate utility of an idea suffice of itself to generate faith ; to do so it must also attract, it must also take possession of the human mind by the pure beauty of truth. In other words, in order that a simple belief, whether instinctive, or arising from reflection, may become faith, the thing believed must be of a nature to procure to man the united joys of contemplation and of activity, to awaken in him the twofold sentiment, that it is of lofty origin and of potent influence ; his idea must be such as that he shall be induced to regard it as a medium between the ideal world and the real world, as a missionary charged to model the one upon the other, and to unite them.

It is easy to understand why the name of faith is used almost exclusively to characterise religious beliefs ; no other belief possesses in so high a degree the two characteristics,* which provoke the development of faith. Many principles of science are beautiful and fruitful in useful applications ; political theories may strike the mind by

* Intellectual beauty and practical importance.

the elevation of the ideas which they embody, and by the grandeur of their results; the doctrines of a pure morality are still more surely and more commonly invested with this double power. Nor have these kinds of belief failed sometimes to generate faith in the human soul. Still, to receive a clear and profound impression at one time of their intellectual beauty, at another of their practical importance, a certain measure of science and of sagacity, or a certain turn for public life, or for politics, as the case may require, is almost always necessary, and this does not belong to all men, nor to every epoch. Religious belief, on the contrary, has no need of such resources: it carries in itself, and in its very nature, infallible means of effect; having once penetrated into the heart of man, however limited and undeveloped in other respects his intelligence may be, or however rude and low his condition, it seems to him a truth at once sublime and usual, a truth which addresses itself to him as an habitant of this earth, and at the same time which opens to him access to those

lofty regions, to those treasures of intellectual life, which without the light of faith he would have never known; it has for him the charm of the purest truth, and exercises over him the empire of the most powerful interest. Can it astonish us, that the belief once existent, its transition to a state of *faith* should be so rapid and so general? But it is precisely on account of its instinctive tendency to transform itself into faith, and into a faith of extraordinary energy, that religious belief has need to continue always free and always subject to the tests which Liberty has the right to impose. Legitimate faith, that is, as we understand it, the faith which does not deceive itself as to its objects, and which addresses itself really to the truth, is beyond contradiction the loftiest condition to which the human mind, in its present state, can attain, for it is that state in which man feels his moral nature fully satisfied, in which he gives himself up entirely to the mission prescribed to him by his thought. But a faith may be illegitimate; it is

possible for this state of the soul to be produced by error; the chance of error (experience proves this at every step) is even here greater, the more the different routes which lead to faith are multiplied and the more its effects are energetic; man may be led astray in his faith by his sentiments, by his habits, by the empire of moral affections or of external circumstances, as well as by the defect or the abuse of his intellectual faculties; for his faith may spring from any of these various sources. Nevertheless, faith once there, it is daring and ambitious; it passionately aspires to diffuse itself, to usurp, to reign, and constitute itself the law of opinions and facts. Not only is faith ambitious, it is strong, it possesses, it displays, in support of its pretensions and its designs, an energy, an address, a perseverance, which are almost always wanting to opinions simply scientific. So that for this mode and degree of conviction and belief, far more than for any other, there is chance of the individual falling into error, and of society falling under oppression.

For these perils there is but one remedy, Liberty. Whether in belief or in action, the nature of man is the same: not only his will but his thought, if it is not to become absurd or culpable, has incessantly need of contradiction and of control. Where faith fails, moral energy and moral dignity fail equally; where liberty does not exist, faith first usurps,—then becomes bewildered—finally destroys itself. If human belief passes to the state of faith, it is its progress and its glory; if, in its efforts toward this result, and after having attained it, it abides constantly under the control of the free intelligence; we have, in this fact, at once a guarantee for society against the tyranny of that faith and a pledge that the faith is legitimate. In the co-existence and mutual respect of these two forces consist the excellency and security of society." *

If I consider this essay, or psychological portrait, shall I rather call it, of faith in general, and

* Revue Française (January, 1828), Méditations et Études Morales, par M. Guizot, pp. 143, 173—175 (edition of 1861).

compare with it Christian faith, I am immediately struck by two features as characterising it. On the one side, the ideas and the facts upon which Christian faith is founded, have evidently that twofold merit of intellectual beauty and of practical importance which has both the right and the power to compel faith. On the other side, Christian faith may originate, in fact does originate, in sources the most diverse, in study and rational meditation, in sentiment, in authority, in an appeal to the divine grace.

What grander and more impressive to the mind of man than the principles of Christian faith, regarded as a whole? God and Man necessantly present the one to the other, in the life of each man, as in the history of the human race! What more grave and more momentous, regarded from a practical point of view? In the present hour, it is peace to the soul of man, peace to his life; in the future, it is his destiny throughout eternity.

The diversity of the sources of Christian faith

is not less evident than its intellectual beauty and its practical importance. Beyond a doubt, the Christian faith of the Chancellor de l'Hospital, of Pascal, of Bossuet, of Fénelon, of Luther, of Calvin, of Newton, of Euler, of Chalmers, was as much the fruit of reflection and of learning, was as freely meditated and adopted as the scepticism of Montaigne and of Bayle, as the sensualism of Hobbes, and the pantheism of Spinoza. It is equally certain that all Christian communities, Roman Catholic or Protestant, have had their mystics, their eminent and sincere believers, whose faith was illumed and fed by sensibility and imagination; in the former case in the emotions and practices of fervent piety; in the latter, in empassioned transports and strivings after a direct communication with God and with Christ. As for the faith founded upon authority, the Church of Rome has presented the most extraordinary example which the world has ever seen, and if Protestantism has caused the faith of individuals to make great strides in the direction of liberty,

it has nevertheless taken for its fixed basis the divine inspiration of the Sacred Book, and has thus ensured a great importance and very efficacious influence to the principle of authority.

Having thus placed Christian Faith in its true point of view, and assigned to it its just rank in the history of the human soul, let us see whence arises the contest in which that Faith is engaged with natural Religion and with religious philosophy? What is the principle of this contest, and what its character?

Here we are met by that all-important question, the question which has been agitated during nineteen centuries, and to which all the intellect of modern times has applied itself. Is the Christian Faith in contradiction to human reason? Some affirm that a contest between the two is natural and inevitable; of these there are who tell us that reason should give way to faith, and again others who say that faith should yield to reason: whereas, on the contrary, there are those also who deny that such contest is inevitable,

and who maintain that faith and reason, as they ought to do, may both live in peace with each other.

In my opinion, the difference between Christian Faith and that which is styled natural Religion, or religious philosophy, is profound; but I do not think that the question between the two has been rightly put, or that the character of their opposition has been rightly defined.

To discover what, in effect, this character is, I address myself, first, to the philosophers.

We know how Descartes began his great philosophical inquiries, to what state he brought his mind in order to enter upon his task: "I persuaded myself," says he, "that I could not do better with respect to the opinions which up to that time I had entertained, than to begin by ridding myself of them entirely, in order then either to replace them by better opinions, or to return to the old ones if I should find them, on examination, to conform to the standard of reason."

Then proceeding to determine the precepts to be followed by him in this recasting of all his opinions by such standard, —"My first principle," said he, "was never to accept anything as true, unless I could evidently recognise its truth; in other words, to avoid carefully any precipitate judgment, to allow my mind to follow no bias, and not to comprise anything in its judgments but what presented itself so clearly and so distinctly to my mind as to leave me no room for doubt."*

More than a century after Descartes, Condillac, wishing to trace to its source the origin of human knowledge, and to write the history of its progressive development, did far more than obliterate from his mind its primitive ideas. He began his labours by curtailing the human mind of a great part of its proper proportions; he reduced man to the primitive condition of a statue, leaving to it no other faculty than the sensation: and then he fancied he could derive

* Discours de la Méthode. Works of Descartes, vol. i., pp. 135, 141; edition of M. Cousin.

from sensations all man's ideas, all his knowledge, —in fact, the entire man himself.

Thus these two great systems, Spiritualism and Sensualism, have their very commencement, each in an arbitrary assumption. Descartes, effacing from the human mind all that it has learnt to know or to believe, solely by its spontaneous activity, and by the natural course of human life, has treated the mind as a *tabula rasa*, and to fill up the void which he has so made, he does not admit anything there unless it presents itself "so clearly and so distinctly to his mind, as to leave him no room to doubt respecting it." Condillac, on the other hand, suppresses not only all that which man has learnt spontaneously and without reflection, but the man himself; leaving in the place of man a statue, sentient, it is true, but only sentient, and with this statue and his sensations alone, he undertakes to reconstruct the man—the entire man—with all the developments of his nature and of his thought.

I see nothing in either of these processes more

than a starting point entirely fictitious, a false step made at the very commencement of philosophy,—in short, a mere hypothesis. Descartes rendered admirable services to the cause of liberty and of intellectual sincerity; Condillac contributed to the progress of the method which I shall call, the method of anatomy and scientific dissection applied both to the human mind and to the material world; but from their very commencement both these philosophers threw themselves out of the high road, the straight road of philosophy; each from the very commencement substituted a mere hypothesis in the place of an exact and complete appreciation of facts. It is far from my intention to discuss either of these two systems; I am content to put aside the two hypotheses, the *tabula rasa* of Descartes, and the statue of Condillac, and I proceed, my way lighted by the facts, as they are, naturally produced in the history of the mind of man, to inquire what is the cause, and what the import, of the struggle which is taking place

between rationalistic religious philosophy, and Christian faith.

The true point of departure of this history and the first of the facts which show themselves there, is the co-existence of man and the universe, spectator and spectacle, the one confronting the other, the "*moi*" and the "*non moi*," the subject and the object, in the language of philosophy. I hasten to say that I repudiate absolutely the different systems,—Pantheism, whether materialistic or idealistic,—Scepticism, whether idealistic or absolute,—which refuse to admit this primary fact, deny the reality of the external world, or the legitimacy of the knowledge of it which the understanding acquires, see only illusions in the relations of man to the universe, or absorb man and the universe together, in the confusion and the obscure darkness of a pretended identity. I do not dream of here discussing these different systems; if I engaged in such discussion, I should have to deal with something very different from the question to which

I am applying myself at this moment. Here I have only to do with Rationalistic Spiritualism. This form of Spiritualism has so much in common with Christianity, that it admits the reality and the distinction of the "*moi*" and of the "*non moi*," of the subject and the object, of the spectator and the spectacle, of spirit and matter, of man and the universe. For Rationalistic Spiritualists as well as for Christians, this is the great fact in the midst of which, and under the empire of which, man's intelligence is developed, man's life passed. Man is there passive, active, and witness, all simultaneously. As spectator he receives impressions from the spectacle, which both prompt him to act, and which stir his being from within; he is witness both to what is passing within himself and to what is passing without himself. Notwithstanding the diversity and the mobility of the impressions which he receives from without, and of the acts which he originates himself, he has a consciousness of his own personal and permanent existence, and also

the consciousness of existences other than his own; he knows not, by the way of reasoning or hypothesis, but by instinctive and immediate intuition, that which, although it is not himself, yet acts upon himself as something coming from himself. Man discovers the external world as he becomes aware of himself, by the intercommunication which takes place between them, and which, nevertheless, shows him how distinct from himself is that external world. He observes and notes both what takes place without him and within him. The results of this observation he terms facts, nor are they for him vain appearances, creations merely of his thought or volition; they are manifestations to him of realities independent of himself, and yet to which he stands in relation; they are bonds of union in which he feels that he is highly interested, not merely as any curious spectator might be, but as a real being; interested, not merely for the sake of science, but interested as one whose very destiny is therein involved.

Amongst these facts, in their nature so numerous and so diverse, I only select those which concern the religious instincts of man, or the questions which they suggest. I admit two kinds of these; first, the spontaneous and common religious beliefs, which mankind professes, although under very different forms and in very different degrees; secondly, the theories and systems of philosophy, emanating from and promulgated by philosophers in order to bring under discussion the popular religious opinions, and to resolve the questions which they involve. On the one side is the natural and instinctive religion of humanity; on the other is human science, which, when it addresses itself to the task of disengaging natural religion from every system of mythology, is called religious philosophy.

Are there in the nature and in the religious history of men no other great facts besides these instincts of humanity, and these systems of human science? Natural Religion with its mythologies, and religious philosophy with its systems, are

these all the religious aid accorded to man to enlighten him upon subjects of religion ?

To the question thus formalised, Rationalistic Spiritualism says, Yes ; whereas Christian Faith replies, No.

In addition to the facts to which I have just referred, viz., the instinctive beliefs of mankind, and the systemised doctrines of human science concerning religion, the Christian faith admits and proclaims another great religious fact, the real and active presence of God in the life of man and in the history of humanity. What the Christian faith affirms is, that the real and active presence of God, in man's life, amidst the mysteries of Providence, of prayer, and of grace, and the real and active presence of God in the history of the human race, amidst the mysteries of Revelation, of Inspiration, of the Incarnation, and of the Redemption, do not constitute simply a poetical mythology, are not merely hypotheses of philosophy, but are psychological and historic facts which human science cannot explain, but

which it nevertheless can, nay, is bound to recognise.

Not philosophers only, but the whole human race, believers and disbelievers, are placed in the same permanent position in which all originally stood; that is to say, Man stands always confronting the Universe, Man always at once spectator and actor, greedy to know and comprehend the spectacle on which he is looking, and of which he himself forms part. The spectacle is immense, infinite; the spectator petty, imperfect, ephemeral, diverse, and with limited powers of vision. Accordingly as he is situated, accordingly as he is disposed and his intelligence reaches, he sees to a greater or less distance, and with a vision more or less accurate, all that the spectacle presents. He observes more or less completely, more or less exactly, the facts which are occurring there. Hence the differences of opinion amongst mankind. Who are they amongst them who succeed best in appreciating and in describing these facts without altering their character or omitting

any? This is the fundamental question, the question antecedent to and which governs all the others.

The contest, then, between Christians and non-Christians, is not a contest between Faith and Reason. Reason occupies a place, and a large place, in the Faith of Christians; they attain to faith as well by reason as by sentiment or authority; nor is there, at the same time, in the negations or the doubts of non-Christians, as much reflection and as much accurate observation as they themselves suppose. Are Christians right in affirming not only the existence of God, but his real and active presence in the life of man and in the history of the human race? Are these psychological and historic facts which reason and science are bound to admit? Or are the Deists who are not Christians justified in denying these facts and in limiting God to existence alone, and in treating him as subject to the general and permanent laws assigned to all other existences?

As far as Christianity and Rationalistic Spi-

ritualism are concerned, this is the real question at issue.

Having pointed out the source of the differences of opinion which we find amongst men, I will now indicate their consequences.

Rationalistic Spiritualism affirms the existence of God, and those who follow this system evince the strongest desire to demonstrate his existence. They are right; for the existence of God, and the rational consequences of his existence, form all their natural religion, all their religious philosophy. In these days, men of minds, as eminent as sincere, M. Émile Saisset, M. Jules Simon, M. Ernest Bersot, M. de Rémusat, have made earnest—I would willingly say pious—efforts to elucidate the proposition of God's existence, and to derive from it all the aid that reason can furnish to explain the instincts and satisfy the religious exigencies of humanity. But these Spiritualists deceive themselves. They do not attain to God himself, they only attain to the idea of God; what they establish is the admissi-

bility of the intellectual idea, not the presence of a real being. In rejecting the psychological and historical facts upon which Christianity is founded, that is to say, the relations free and unintermitted of God with Man, whether in the individual life of each man or in the history of the mankind, Rationalistic Spiritualism deprives itself of direct and positive evidence to prove God's existence; it places a human argument in the place of the divine manifestation, and a scientific work of man in the place of the real action of God.

In an excellent book, justly entitled by him "Idea of God," another contemporary philosopher, M. Caro, has valiantly, and with brilliant success, defended this idea against the different systems which reject or distort it. And not limiting himself to polemics, he has concluded his work by a forcible and clear enunciation of his own thought. "It is the living God, the intelligent God, whom we defend against the God of Naturalism, who would not be more than a law of geometry or a blind force; against the God of

Hegel, who would not be more than an indeterminate Being, an origin and a commencement of things, or an absolute mind, result at once and product of the world; against the God of the new Idealists, who, to save his divinity, strip him of his reality. We affirm, in opposition to all these subtle and hazardous conceptions, that a supposed perfect being, unless he had an existence, would not be perfect; that a mere ideal of the mind is not a God; that if he is not a substance he is but a conception, a pure category of spirit, a creation and dependence upon man's thought which, in ceasing to exist, annihilates its God; that, if he is not cause, he is the most useless of beings; and if he is cause, he is mind supreme, for were he not so he would be nothing but an unconscious and necessary agent, a blind spring of the world, inferior to what he produces, since in the organic matter that emanates from him, an intelligence displays itself, of which he would possess nothing, and since too in man is manifested a divine Reason.

Another remark, and we have done with our definition. This living God, this God intelligent, is also a God that loves . . . A God that loved not would not be worthy of being adored . . . We do not adore a law, however simple it may be, however fruitful in consequence; we do not adore a force if it be blind, however potent, however universal it may be; nor an ideal, however pure it may be, if it be only an abstraction. We only adore a being who is living perfection, the perfection of reality in its highest forms of mind and love. Every other adoration implies a contradiction if the object is a pure abstraction, idolatry if the object be the substance of the universe or humanity.

This is God as he appears to reason, and as the religious conscience of humanity will have him. This is your God." *

It is to be regretted M. Caro has not carried his conclusions still higher, and completed his

* L'Idée de Dieu et ses Nouveaux Critiques. By E. Caro. p. 498. 8vo. Paris, 1864.

work by proceeding on from philosophical spiritualism to Christian Spiritualism.

Rationalistic Deism is merely an idea of God, given as the philosophical solution of the grand problem, which the spectacle of the Universe and of Man in the Universe causes to weigh upon the soul of man.

Christianity is faith in God, Being real, Sovereign real, continually present, and active in the government of the Universe, as he is in the soul of man and in the history of the human race.

Rationalistic Deism arrives at the idea of God, and stops short there, because it ignores the psychological and historical facts which go beyond this idea. It is by holding account of these facts, and by doing to them the homage which is their due, that Christianity forwards and justifies her faith.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

EVERY doctrine, religious, moral, or political, has yet to submit to a test—the great test—the practical application. The idea has to be transformed into reality, the thought to be made life.

Philosophers pride themselves upon searching only for the truth, upon busying themselves only with the theoretical truth of their ideas, to the neglect of every other consideration. They are right in one sense: for the knowledge of truth, of truth as it is in itself, is that which the human mind proposes to itself as its object, and is the only thing which can satisfy it; if man pretends to it, it is his right and his honour to do so: whatever the object of his study, the mind does not halt

or rest until it believes that it has attained to the truth.

This is no privilege of philosophers; neither are they the only ones for whom truth is a law: all men have a right to live under its empire, whether as to facts or ideas. No one, not even those who affect most disdain for theory, would venture to lay down the principle that we should be indifferent whether we are essentially in the right, and that practically there is no difference between truth and error.

But by what signs is truth recognisable? Are there no other than the affirmations of that inquisitive spectator, named the human mind? Is it only by language, by reasoning, and by discussion, that the truth of an idea and of a doctrine manifests and proves itself?

To such a pretension, if advanced, I hesitate not to reply with a denial, and in doing so, to repeat what I have just said: every doctrine, religious, moral, or political, has to submit to a test,—the practical application. The idea trans-

formed into reality, the thought made the life; these are the most certain signs of an idea being intrinsically true, these, too, are proofs of its reasonable legitimacy, which it is bound to give.

There is a radical difference between the material world and the intellectual world. The laws which regulate and maintain order in the material world, are independent of man, of both his thought and his volition. It matters not that he knows these laws, or is ignorant of them; they do not the less exist and govern; man has no power to change, arrest, or suspend their operation; he cannot influence them. Galileo was right to say of the earth, in spite of his judges, "Still it moves;" it would have moved even if Galileo, as well as his judges, had been ignorant of the fact, and the contest between the whirlpool of Descartes and Newton's principle of attraction, was a matter perfectly indifferent to the general system of the world. *There* man's error is absolutely without effect or influence.

In the intellectual and moral world it is otherwise; here man is not only spectator, he is an actor, an actor free or not to act—to act with effect. He thinks and he wills, and so contributes to the facts which take place in the world; he knows, or is ignorant of, the laws, he respects or violates the laws which preside here, but which do not preside here as laws external to and independent of himself. Man's errors, man's faults, are not here without real and serious consequences; they have the power of sowing evil and of carrying perturbation into the intellectual and moral world, thus delivered up, as the Bible proclaims, to the disputes of men.

Learned men, in the study and appreciation of the material world, separate sciences absolutely, and, considering each apart from its practical application, occupy themselves in their scientific investigations only with the pure theory. This I understand and admit; for such a course does not endanger the security of society or the results of their own labours. Their ignorance

and their errors have no doubt grave inconveniences; the facts and the forces of the material world are either misconceived or not turned sufficiently to account; man and human society do not reap all the advantages which the profound and exact knowledge of the truth might, in this respect, procure them. Such ill, although real, is of a negative description, a good, it may be, missed or postponed; but no general disturbance results in that material world upon which naturalists or chemists concentrate their labours; the world will not have to undergo the effect, nor to pay the penalty, of their ignorance or of their errors. The intellectual and moral world, on the contrary, runs a greater risk, and imposes upon its teachers severer duties; no doubt these study it as freely, and make truth, too, their object; but science does not here escape the weight of its own conclusions; it is a power as formidable in its abuse as it is in itself sublime; it may carry into the world to which it addresses itself trouble instead of order, incendiarism instead of light. If practical appli-

cation is not here the object of science, it is still its necessary and appropriate proof; in facts as in a mirror are reflected the truth or the error, the good or the ill, of human opinions.

Christianity has now been subjected to this test for nineteen centuries: it is subject to it at this moment, it will continue ever to be so. I need not say that I do not propose to retrace here the narrative of the manner in which it has supported and surmounted that test; that would be to write the History of Christianity. I confine myself, on the contrary, to a single small part of this history, the most modest part, the least pretending: and shall endeavour to bare a little to the view what Christianity, when it has been put into practice, what Christian Faith, after it has become Christian Life, has in the different situations of man's life accomplished, and is every day accomplishing, for the ennoblement of his nature, and the furtherance of his ultimate destiny.

Three words, "*Rights of Man*," inscribed upon

the banners of the French Revolution, constituted its force; the rights of man as man, rights by this title alone, by virtue alone of his humanity. Three other words, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,* have served as a commentary upon the three former. It is in the name of these two maxims that the French Revolution is making the tour of the world; they are the sources of the good and the evil, the movements in advance as well as the ruinous calamities of our time and of an unknown future.

Whilst all of true and good that these two maxims contain is Christian and was proclaimed by Christianity, all that they have of false and fatal is condemned and expressly repudiated by Christianity. Not only in this terrible confusion does Christianity proclaim in principle the part that is good, and condemn in principle the part that is evil; but Christianity alone, in point of fact, has the necessary authority and moral force to suppress the evil without at the same time causing the good also to perish.

It is a subject to us, in these days, of pride, and of a pride that is just, that we have at last begun to consider man himself, the individual man, his existence, and his personal liberty, his rights, and the guarantees of his rights, as the essential objects of social institutions. We have at last emerged from the rut of pagan antiquity, glorious at once and rude, where the individual, made wholly subordinate, was sacrificed to the state, where man was regarded simply as citizen, and thousands of human creatures were degraded and treated as cyphers in favour of a single class. Men are no longer numbered as Jews and Gentiles, Romans and Barbarians, freemen and slaves. Christianity first not only proclaimed but put into practice this important truth. The right of every man, as man, the worth of the human soul, and of the human person, irrespectively of his situation in life, constitute the starting-point, the fundamental idea, the dominant precept of the Christian reli-

gion. It was, in effect, in religious society, in the rising Christian Church, that this principle was first proclaimed, and first put into practice; Christianity treated the relation of man to God as the chief concern of man's life, and religious liberty as the chief of human liberties; it was in the presence of God that Christians admitted the equal importance of every soul; as it was amongst Christians themselves that they greeted each other as brethren, and that fraternity engendered charity. But although sprung from a source so elevated, and applied at first upon a stage so small, the Christian idea was not on that account less potent, or less fruitful; in spite of obstacles and reverses it maintained itself, and diffused itself through centuries and over distant countries; it made constant efforts to penetrate civil society. At the epochs of the history of Christendom which are most to be deplored, in the midst of the oppressions and the iniquities which have brought desolation upon it, daring voices have never been

wanting: at one time it was the voice of the Christian Church itself directed against the masters of the earth; at another a voice issuing from the bosom of the Church itself, full of generous protestations against the disorders and acts of violence which were taking place in its own bosom. Jesus, God and man, having raised man before God, man never afterwards entirely humiliated and degraded himself before any human tyranny. In the presence of the greatest inequalities of earthly power, the appellation, *brethren*, never ceased to be echoed in Christian Society; and even at this day, after all the progress which equality has made in civil society, it is only in religious societies and in Christian Churches that men hear themselves greeted as *brethren*.

The Christian faith has not only exercised a political influence in the state by changing the relations in which individuals stand to the political authorities, or in which the different classes stand to one another: it has also introduced a change in the constitution of the primary natural

and imperishable association, called family. There, also, it has caused to disappear, at one time, the despotism of husband and father; at another, the degradation of wife, and the brutal or licentious independence of children. If we give ourselves the trouble to compare the Christian family as religion, laws, and morals have made it, with the family of antiquity, which was most strongly constituted, namely, the Roman family,—we shall not need to examine long before we discern clearly on which side order really is, on which side the just appreciation of natural sentiments, the respect for right and liberty.

I have said that at the same time that Christianity proclaims and puts in practice all that is true and healthy in the popular maxims of our times, man's rights and liberty, his equality and fraternity, it condemns and rejects all that they contain of false and deplorable. There is one very striking fact in the history of the foundation of Christianity, a fact traceable not

merely in the records of a few years, but through three centuries. Christianity began with resisting absolute power, and with laying claim to liberty of conscience. It owed its establishment to the same cause. In the Roman world no one any longer made even a show of resistance; every kind of oppression was in force, every claim to freedom abandoned: the Christians again raised high the banner of right, and of resistance in the name of right; but never did they raise their banner to encourage revolt or attacks upon authority; they undertook the defence of liberty against tyranny, and never made appeals to insurrection against authority. Martyrdom, not murder; such is the sum of the history of Christianity from the day of its birth in the manger of Jesus, to the day when it mounted the throne of Constantine.

The reason of this is, that from the time when Christianity was yet in its cradle, and even afterwards when it was struggling to conquer its liberty, liberty was not an exclusive idea for Christians either in their doctrines or their lives: they recog-

nised, respected, and proclaimed with equal solicitude both principles upon which the moral order of the world reposes, authority and liberty. They never, in any respect, sacrificed the one to the other, nor humiliated the one in the presence of the other; masters and disciples, all referred power to its true source, and did homage to its right at the same time that they maintained their own right against power. When Jesus spoke, the people were astonished at his doctrine, "for he taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."* Jesus declared formally to his disciples his authority over them, and the mission which it imposed upon them: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."† And when St. Paul, although exposed to all kinds of perils and struggles, spread abroad throughout the Roman Empire the doctrines of Jesus, he said to the new Christians, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.

* Matt. vii. 29. † John xv. 16.

For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. . . Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake."* Nor can I here omit again to cite the words which Jesus himself addressed to the Pharisees: "Render under Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." †

The respect for authority as much as for liberty, the right of power as well as the right of conscience, the separation of religious life from civil life,—all these were not, for the primitive Christians, simple necessities arising out of their situation, nor simple counsels of prudence; they were principles of doctrine and precepts of life, recognised and practised in the name of justice and of truth.

Christian doctrine and Christian practice have been, I know, greatly altered, lost sight of, violated, in the course of the history of the Christian world. Human nature succumbs readily to the

* Romans xiii. 1, 5. † Matt. xxii. 21.

temptations of victory and pleasure; when Christianity once became powerful it was too often invaded and disfigured by earthly interests and passions; ambition, cupidity, pride, the arrogance of power, and the lies of cunning; every evil inclination, every vice which the Christian faith rebukes and combats, displayed themselves in this world which Christianity had not conquered merely to hand it over to them, but from which, nevertheless, it had not expelled them. The grand and salutary doctrines of Christianity have been often themselves perverted and profaned to the service of an egotism assuming every shape and carried to every pitch. Still they never were lost, they never perished in this impure mixture and this unworthy use; they survived, they combated, sometimes in obscurity, sometimes in the broad light of day; everywhere, at every epoch, Christian voices, Christian lives, and Christian Reforms protested and struggled against the passions and the corruptions of mankind. And in spite of all these centuries, so sombre, so full of agitation,

of violence, and of oppression, so full of moral and material ill, the decline of man and of human society did not ensue. Greece and Rome, in their state of youthful growth, were glorious and vigorous; and glorious, too, was the development in them of human intelligence and dignity; but their career was short, and these two brilliant forms of society did not find in their ideas, traditions, or models, a sufficiency of moral force to enable them to escape from, or even survive, the seductive and corrupting influence of material grandeur and of human success. Amidst all the sufferings, all the darkness, all the crimes which agitate her long career, Christianity has proved infinitely healthier and more sound; she has made herself an incessant subject of study; she has shifted her place upon her couch of sorrow; she has raised herself up, she has renewed, regenerated herself; she has grown and prospered at the same time that she has suffered; and in spite of the ills, vices, and perils against which Christianity has had to defend herself, and

against which she will ever have to defend herself, she has before her, over the whole face of the world, a future immense and full of promise. This she owes to her origin—she was born in the manger of Jesus.

There is at present a disposition amongst earnest and enlightened men to recognise, it is true, the services which Christianity has rendered to the world; but to attribute them only to the morality of Christianity. They laud to the sky the moral character of Jesus, and his moral precepts; but they repudiate, nay, deplore, the dogmas with which, in the Christian faith, Christian morality is combined and incorporated; they demand that the morality be separated from it, and be presented to man without anything but its intellectual beauty and practical excellence. Although not disputing that there is somewhat of human in the origin and empire of morality, I have established in this volume of Meditations that it is necessarily allied to religious belief, and that when separated from its divine source, and

viewed apart from that which gives it sanction, it is incomplete, illogical, and powerless—a branch without root and without fruit. I go farther now, and express my meaning fully. Not only is Christian morality intimately connected with Christian faith, as the Christian faith is itself connected with Christian dogmas, but Christian morals, Christian faith, and Christian dogmas have taken their origin, and derived their force, at a source still higher, and in an authority still more decisive. Christianity did not begin, it did not rise upon the world, as one body of doctrines or code of precepts; from its first step it was a truth, strange to the ordinary course of human affairs, and superior to them; a fact divine, and an act divine; it was as such, and by its character as such, that, sometimes all at once, and sometimes gradually, it struck men as by a blow and vanquished them, at first the rude and simple, then the great and learned, publicans and emperors, the disciples of Plato, and the fishermen of the sea of Gennesareth. At different moments, and for different motives, all

of them saw in the cradle, and the rapid extent of infant Christianity, a sublime and superhuman fact, a God present and acting in and by Jesus. Some recognised and adored him at the very moment of his appearing; others observed him with troubled and angry feelings; but, in proportion as the truth developed itself, even those who detested him doubted if they were right in doubting. The council and all the senate of the children of Israel had caused Peter and the other apostles to be placed in prison, and took counsel to have them put to death. "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; and said unto them: Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were

scattered and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."*

The question which Gamaliel thus put with respect to Christianity at its birth was not new; the high priest of Israel had already made the same demand of Jesus himself: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God? Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said."† The Jews replied to the affirmation of Jesus by crucifying him. A short time afterwards, when they sought to treat the apostles as their Master had been treated, Gamaliel counselled them to abide the test of

* Acts v. 21, 33—39. † Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.

time, and in the meanwhile to leave "these people in repose." They did not leave these people in repose, and the proof was only on that account the more decisive: after three centuries of persecutions and martyrdoms, the grand facts of Christianity,—the Revelation, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Inspiration of the Scriptures,—became the grand dogmas of Christianity, the basis of Christian faith, which faith in its turn is the basis of Christian Life. Sixteen centuries elapsed from this trial of Christianity in its cradle, and it was made to undergo fresh and still ruder trials; in these trials earthly interests and human errors and passions had a great part; Christ's precepts were sometimes forgotten, and sometimes converted into human instruments; no doctrine or idea was ever so constantly in contact with, and at issue with, facts; never was theory more rigorously reviewed, more subjected to the test of practical application in every form and every shape. The design which emanated from God traversed and surmounted all these perils; it

braved the faults of its adherents and the blows of its enemies. It is engaged in our days in a new contest, and is subjected to fresh trials; it has entered upon it with the same arms, which, nineteen centuries ago, secured its triumph, with the grand facts which form the basis of Christian faith, and the great examples which furnish the rule of Christian living. The History of Christianity is the strongest proof of its Divinity, and the surest guarantee for its future. The authenticity and authority of this history will be the subject of the next and last series of my "Meditations."

APPENDIX.

ECCE HOMO: such is the title of a work published anonymously, at London and at Cambridge in 1866, which produced on its appearance a great sensation in London, a sensation which still continues: all the papers and reviews, whether religious, philosophical, or simply literary, busied themselves with it, either to praise or attack it; the distinguished chief of the Liberal Party himself, perhaps soon to be the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Gladstone, has just made it the subject of three articles, which are remarkable alike for acuteness, elegance, and eloquence. They appeared in one of the most widely circulated periodicals in his country.*

"No anonymous book," says he, "since the 'Vestiges of Creation' (now more than twenty years old), indeed, it might almost be said, no theological book, whether anonymous, or of certified authorship—that has appeared within the same interval, has attracted anything like the amount of notice and of criticism which have been bestowed upon the remarkable volume, entitled 'Ecce Homo.'"

* "Good Words," a Monthly Review, edited by Norman Macleod, one of the Chaplains of her Majesty Queen Victoria. The articles referred to appeared in the numbers of January, February, and March, 1868.

The anonymous author has expressed in a very short preface his intention in writing this volume, as well as its fundamental ideas. "Those who feel," says he, "dissatisfied with the current conceptions of Christ, if they cannot rest content without a definite opinion, may find it necessary to do what, to persons not so dissatisfied, it seems audacious and perilous to do. They may be obliged to reconsider the whole subject from the beginning, and placing themselves, in imagination, at the time when he whom we call Christ bore no such name, but was simply, as St. Luke describes him, a young man of promise, popular with those who knew him, and appearing to enjoy the Divine favour, to trace his biography from point to point, and accept those conclusions about him, not which Church doctors, or even apostles have sealed with their authority, but which the facts themselves, critically weighed, appear to warrant.

"This is what the present writer undertook to do for the satisfaction of his own mind, and because, after reading a good many books on Christ, he felt still constrained to confess that there was no historical character whose motives, objects and feelings remained so incomprehensible to him. The inquiry which proved serviceable to himself may chance to be useful to others.

"What is now published is a fragment. No theological questions whatever are here discussed. Christ as the Creator of modern Theology and Religion will make the subject of another volume; which, however, the author does not hope to publish for some time to come. In the meanwhile, he has endeavoured to furnish an answer to the question, 'What was Christ's object in founding the

Society which is called by his name, and how is it adapted to attain that object ?'"

On merely considering, even after a first perusal, the brief words which I have here extracted, it is, I think, impossible not to perceive how much there is that is artificial and embarrassed, I had almost said how much there is that is false, not only in the position in which the Author has placed himself at the very outset, but in the special intentions which he avows. To study the life and the aim of the life of Christ without considering him "as the Creator of Modern Theology and Religion," to defer all examination and conclusion upon this last subject; to aspire to know the person and the mind of Christ after thus separating him from his work; to inquire what he meant to accomplish when living, without considering what he in effect accomplished in the ages which followed his passage through the world; to treat him, in short, and to examine him as we should treat and examine a person unknown to us—a fossil man, so to say, of which the features might be traceable in some contemporary document, showing that he once existed, but who has left no other trace to supply us with argument or proof of what he intended, or what he performed;—this, undoubtedly, is a strange manner of proceeding, one which holds out very little chance of an accurate and true comprehension of the immense fact called Christianity, thus mutilated in its very cradle, Christianity of which the writer limits himself to a bare search after the germ in the nascent thought of its owner, whereas it might have been observed, and its nature verified in its positive and vast development.

This is a species of decomposition, of which the great

facts of history and morality do not admit. We are not here, like anatomists, describing the autopsy of a corpse. To know and comprehend such facts really, we must study them in their different elements and in all the development of their life. They form a drama in which we are actors, not a manuscript which we are deciphering.

I can easily understand how the anonymous writer of the "Ecce Homo" came to conceive the idea of his book, and to confine it within the limits which he has himself assigned: I can also understand his motives. Like all his contemporaries, he is placed and lives in presence of the grave questions agitated in these days respecting Christianity and its author. What was Christ?—a man or very God, or God and man at once? How did the divine nature and the human nature manifest themselves in him? Did he really effect the miracles assigned to him? Can there be such things as miracles? What are we to understand by the supernatural? Is God a real being personal and free, existing and accomplishing his works in a region beyond that which we style Nature? Christianity and the life of its founder inevitably suggest all these questions, which in our days occupy and violently agitate men's minds. The anonymous author of the "Ecce Homo" did not wish to enter upon them; nay, it was his aim to study and comprehend Christ without touching them at all. Is it because upon these grave problems he entertains himself no positive and decided opinions? Or, because he wished, to a certain extent, to accommodate himself to the state of opinion of some of his contemporaries, and to treat Christ as those speak of him who only see in him a man, who regard Christianity as a fact not supernatural, owing its origin, like

other natural facts, to the sole and proper force of mankind? Upon this I can form no opinion; I neither know the anonymous author of the "Ecce Homo," nor the motives which actuate him: what is certain is, that he is quite right in entitling his book "Ecce Homo," for it is only the Man Christ that he has proposed to study, and it is by studying the Man Christ that he has proposed to explain Christianity.

I do not know if, after having written his book, he was aware of the result to which it leads, but the result is in effect a strange one,—it is condemnatory and destructive of the fundamental idea of the book, it demonstrates by a sincere and honest, although an incomplete and superficial study of the facts, the impossibility of explaining either Christ by the human nature alone, or the Christian Religion by any merely natural operations of humanity.

The work is divided into two parts, and contains altogether twenty-four chapters. The first part is devoted to the study of Christ personally, his peculiar character, his manner of dealing with men, the mission which he proposed to himself to accomplish, the nature of the society which he sought to found, and the authority which he counted upon exercising. In the second part, the Christian society itself, its points of resemblance to the systems of philosophy and its points of difference therefrom, its fundamental principles and positive laws, and the habits and sentiments which are developed by those laws, all become in turn the objects of the author's observations and descriptions. Observations often profound, descriptions often exact and striking, although somewhat minute and lengthy; everywhere, however, there breathes forth a sentiment unques-

tionably moral, and full of the gentlest sympathy for humanity. All this gives to the work a real attractiveness, in spite of the vagueness of the ideas which reign there, and in spite of the perceptible incertitude of the author's conclusions upon the solemn questions which he approaches, but upon which he does not enter.

I have no intention of saying more; I have not to render an account in detail of this book or to discuss any of the author's opinions or assertions upon which I may not agree with him; my aim is only to determine the character of his work, and to show plainly, first its tendency and then its insufficiency. There precisely is his originality; in setting out, and dealing with the subject of the purely human nature both of Christ and of Christianity, he seems not far from participating the opinions of Rationalistic criticism; but the more he advances, the farther he departs from the goal at which the Rationalists arrive: he appears predisposed in their favour; the process of his thought seems often to conform to theirs; his conclusions are not clearly contrary, but in effect, under the empire either of his instincts or under the influence of his historical and moral studies, he is more Christian than he appears, perhaps even more so than he believes himself to be; and if the firm doctrines of Christianity find in him no sure and declared defender, neither do they encounter in him the consistent hostility of a severe logician or the indifferentism of a mere sceptic.

There are several passages of this remarkable work which are particularly distinguished by these characteristics. To these I feel pleasure in referring the reader. They are in both parts of the book; that is to say, in the first part,

chapter fifth, entitled *Christ's Credentials*, and chapter ninth,* entitled *Reflections on the Nature of Christ's Society;* in the second part, chapter tenth, entitled *Christ's Legislation compared with Philosophic systems*, and chapter the eleventh, *The Christian Republic*.† A perusal of these passages will, if I do not deceive myself, fully justify the impression which the work has made upon me, and satisfy the reader that I am right in what I have said of the author's inconsistency with respect to religion.

Without expressly referring to any other passages I simply remark, that there are in this book ideas expressed and particular assertions made, which suggest numerous questions and call for many observations. I find in the entire volume a singular mixture of plain and practical common sense with a subtlety sometimes tinctured with piety, and sometimes with philosophy. There reigns in it, upon the nature of man and of human societies, an intellectual elevation, both moral and religious, which embarrasses and obscures itself in a long and painful process of refinements. It bears the impress of a grandeur of thought and of sentiment, without presenting them, however, in a form sufficiently simple and vivid. But I have no idea of examining or discussing here in detail this remarkable work; my aim is only to make the result clear to the reader, to which I have already referred, and indeed it appears incontestable. The author's aim has been to study and pourtray the human part of Christ, the human part of his doctrine as well as of his life. He has declared this to be his aim by entitling his book "Ecce Homo," and by saying that he deferred to

* Ecce Homo, ed. 1866, pp. 41—51, 81—102.

† *Ibid*, pp. 108—119, 120—126.

another volume "every theological question, every study of Christ as the Creator of Theology and of Modern Religion." He has already done much more than he is aware; the striking inference from his first volume being that there was in Christ much more than man, and that if he had been but man, however superior we may picture his nature to be to that of ordinary humanity, the work of Christianity, such as it in fact was and is, would have been to him a thing not only which he could not have accomplished, but which he could not even have conceived.

THE END.

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